

Stacey Winklepleck 00:03

Hi, and welcome to the KnitPicks podcasts. I'm Stacey, I'm the Outreach Director for KnitPicks, and I'm here with Lee,

Lee Meredith 00:13

graphic designer who does books and patterns for KnitPicks. Hi.

Stacey Winklepleck 00:20

So have you been?

Lee Meredith 00:24

Okay. Hangin' in there...Not a question I'm used to answering on the podcast.

Stacey Winklepleck 00:30

Well, what have you been knitting?

Lee Meredith 00:33

Oh, I haven't been knitting very much. Actually. I've been. I've been working on some socks darning projects using all Yeah, scraps of sock yarn. Um I have a darning loom? That's a vintage from Russia loom it's really cool. So I've been using up sock yarn scraps to mend old socks, not hand knit socks, just old socks, so they can live longer.

Stacey Winklepleck 00:58

And I was so excited when I saw your the pictures of your loom that I really need to buy one and I got home, I completely put it on my head. But I do want to buy it cuz I keep running into my socks that have holes in them. And I'm like, No, I need to get that loom so I can fix them.

Lee Meredith 01:12

Yeah, this is completely unsponsored content, we do not sell them on the KnitPicks website. But I recommend everyone who wears holes in their socks. I don't know if that's something that's like specific to different kinds of feet. I know I get holes in the heels of every socks ever. And other people, I don't get them in the toes. It depends on your feet and your shoes and how you walk and I don't know.

Stacey Winklepleck 01:34

Yeah, mine is usually in the toes. Once in a while on the back of my heel too. Usually the toes I can fix, it's the ones that are the holes, like on the like on the bottom of my foot or whatever, cuz I'm one of those bad people who just who wear socks around the house and doesn't put shoes on and just like wears them outside. Well, if you want to take care of them, you should not be wearing them. Just by themselves. I don't have carpet, but I do have hardwood floors, and they just they wear and anyway. Enough confession time.

Lee Meredith 02:06

Yeah, so well, since since since we talked about this for a while, we'll throw a link to the Etsy store where I got my loom onto the but you can also just search on darning loom. And you can find different there's I think there's a few different Etsy sellers who sell them both, both vintage and more like modern ones, maybe I think I'm not sure. Anyway, we'll link to it. What are you up to lately?

Stacey Winklepleck 02:30

I've just been working on socks, as usual, because it's summer. And that's the only thing I ever worked on in the summer. kind of put aside my sweater project for a while, I actually dug out like an old sock pattern that I hadn't finished, because I wasn't happy with the pattern. So it went into a bag and then went into the black hole in my closet. So I pulled it back out. I'm like, Alright, I'm gonna, I'm gonna do what I said, I think week or two ago, I'm just gonna frog it and just restart it. So I'll be happier. And I am so now I have a it's kind of my, my project to work on when I don't want to pay too much attention. Like during a meeting or you know, watching like TV really intently if I'm not doing something else. So that's, that's pretty much it. It's been really hot here. So I haven't really been in the mood to like hold wool. So yeah, like, incredibly hot. So while we are

Lee Meredith 03:27

Speaking of incredibly hot weather, we have like a very topical. I'm being ironic right now because we're actually going to talk about bulky and super bulky yarns, which is like not what we want to be dealing with right now. But we're fine to talk about it. We can talk about it any time of the year. That's not a problem.

Stacey Winklepleck 03:44

Yeah, wow, what a great transition, didn't even think of that. But well, I mean, to be honest, I don't mind using like chunky wool is what I do it when I'm crocheting like a granny square, or like I have a granny square blanket, but it's on the site, which is basically just a giant granny square. Because if you're crocheting its area I don't know i don't mind it as much knitting when it's a really dense knitted fabric in the super bulky or bulky yarn I kind of get more bothered by it, but crochet yay crochet crochet. Personally,

Lee Meredith 04:20

yeah, so we should say before we get too into it that we are going to be talking about chunky yarns between the two of us but then after that we're going to be having an interview or conversation with Michael Smith about more about spinning but also about knitting and crochet in his whole background. So stay tuned for that.

Stacey Winklepleck 04:38

I can't wait to hear it.

Lee Meredith 04:40

Yeah, it's I think it's really fun interview. So chunky yarns, we use the word chunky a lot. I think that's a common word but chunky isn't like an official way like bulky and super bulky are official weights. So when I think of chunky yarns, I kind of think of like Aran too bulky personally, which aran is more like a heavy worsted like anything heavier than worsted I kind of like think of as chunky which is one of my favorite weights to work with. Especially back when I used to design a lot. I used to use a lot of aran and bulky weight yarns in my design to like test out ideas and stuff and do like prototypes to because it would knit up so much faster than I could do the official sample and a lighter weight.

Stacey Winklepleck 05:21

Yeah, that's how I that's kind of how I think of chunky yarn, kind of like a catch all of anything heavier than an aran weight heavier than worsted weight, I guess, is kind of what you'd put chunky. Like that's the group you'd put chunky yarn in. And that can go all the way up to I think jumbo is actually a term that's used. It's just there's not that many yarns that's Yeah.

Lee Meredith 05:44

Jumbo would be heavier than super bulky and I think on KnitPicks the heaviest we get is super bulky. Although we used to have a jumbo right one or two, many years ago before my time, but no more.

Stacey Winklepleck 05:55

We sure did but we have a lot of so what do you do you prefer bulky or super bulky or do you just use it both interchangeably?

Lee Meredith 06:03

It depends on the project. I've actually I knit a cardigan like year and a half ago that was two strands of wool of the Andes bulky held together. Oh so I was using bulky yarn but it was acting as a super bulky because it was double stranded and it's a very warm cardigan. Imagine it was an experiment I wanted to try because it was it was improvised and I wanted it to knit up fast and it did and I do wear it sometimes but it's a bit dense. It's not an everyday cardigan.

Stacey Winklepleck 06:39

Yeah, I use it more I don't knit too many garments with anything heavy. I mean it's it's a personal choice. I made like anything heavier than a worsted I just don't like wearing them whether it's too warm or just looks too bulky on my body frame. So I do have one sweater that I did it in Swish Bulky which I'd say is probably my favorite bulky yarn. I was so happy we we discontinued it for a while because of the price point it was getting too heavy. So we brought it back and I think that's probably my favorite of the bulky just the regular bulky yarns. Because it does make a really nice garment and it is a really warm sweater and I think I want to say I made it like eight years ago and it still just holds up and I wear it every year. So

Lee Meredith 07:26

I think our Swish Bulky and Wool the Andes bulky and our Wool of the Andes Superwash Bulky are all kind of on the lighter end of the bulky spectrum. They're like I think they're very garment friendly yarns. We released a book about a year ago, not a year ago but last winter called Windfall. That's all bulky accessories and garments and there's garments and in Swish Bulky and Wool of the Andes Bulky and Wonder Fluff and simply a wonderful. Yeah. I think none of the garments in this in this collection look like too heavy. Like they all look they all look comfortable and you know, like something you'd want to wear. Yeah, I think all those are good. Good garment yarns. And then we have some yarns that are really not meant for garments I think like, like a Tuff Puff like you use that a lot right or not a lot but you've used that but not garments.

Stacey Winklepleck 08:26

Yeah, I've used it like I mentioned earlier about my granny square blanket, which is basically just like a big giant granny square and really fun to knit. Excuse me crochet, not knit. It was it was super fun. And I like using the bright colors and creating this giant blanket in like a day. So it really did went really fast because it's so big. And then I think bulky yarns are really great for toys like you can make. For the most part most toys you can do in any weight. There might be some that are more exactly you need like the exact for but the toys I make are just like any weight. So one of my favorites not really toy but I love the Kitty Poof I have made that so many times we were talking before the before we started recording this Sarah our producer Sarah has made so many of them to they used to decorate my desk, they're still floating around my house. I love them. I love them so much and I made them in so many different colors

Lee Meredith 09:26

It's a great gift item, to , because obviously doesn't have to fit or match someone's taste for accessories or anything. They're not going to wear it on their body, so.

Stacey Winklepleck 09:33

yeah, exactly right. But I know you use that you've used bulky and super bulky a lot in accessories. Yeah, garments.

Lee Meredith 09:43

Yeah, I used to design accessories, mainly patterns and a lot like most of my patterns I designed were for any gauge. So what I would do a lot of the time is is knit up my first sample prototype to test it out and like figure out the construction in a bulky or super bulky because it wouldn't add up really quickly and then I could if it you know if the construction failed and I need to try again you know just frog it go again and and then once I got it all figured out then I knit another sample and like a worsted or something to show it in a couple different weights and so I've used a lot of you know, size 11 size 13 needles over the years. I also designed a very simple fun little pattern in our Fable Fur for a headband, just a simple headband pattern that looks like for headband. It's also very quick to knit up so that's fun.

Stacey Winklepleck 10:36

Yeah, I haven't I haven't used Fable Fur a lot I think I think I got because when I my early on in my knitting time which was like you know, in 2002 I used a lot of fun fur and was in love with it and now I think I just haven't used it as much but I do know that Fable Fur makes really adorable toys. My mom has made a bunch of them. She absolutely adores it.

Lee Meredith 11:03

Yeah as someone who learned to knit in 2003 and is a lot of fun for and has used fable for fable for and fun fur are not the same thing. If you're wondering Oh for anyone out there wondering. Yeah the old early 2000s fun fur it was like a very different situation from like Fable Fur it actually looks like faux fur but we have it in some fun colors that are like not natural colors, which I think are cool, too. But it feels so soft.

Stacey Winklepleck 11:32

Yeah, I see Fable Fur getting used a lot. Like as an edging. Like there's this great. This great new pattern by Christina Morrissey that is a big, like, shawl it's called Aria. And it's got like a fable for like collar. And it looks so cool. Yeah.

Lee Meredith 11:50

Yeah, it's I like it for that I wanted to make like a sweater and do the cuffs and the collar and that haven't done it yet. But it's really soft. It's just like if you're if you're worried because it is polyester because I don't think there's a way to make that type of thing without using manmade fibers. But so it is what it is. If you're okay with polyester. It's surprisingly soft.

Stacey Winklepleck 12:13

Yeah, I will say it is. It is really soft. Like you can like pet it and like keep it as a pet on your desk or something. It's just really soft. And actually that's what we used to call kitten fur because it was so soft. We got

Lee Meredith 12:26

it. Yeah. Yeah, that's the other that um, so I said you can't do that without with animal fibers. But it is very different, wonder fluff is a very different yarn than Fable Fur but it is. It's mostly alpaca, right, it's 70% baby alpaca, 7% merino wool and 23% nylon, and that nylon is like a tube that's in the middle and then the alpaca and Merino are like blown through the tube. So it's like just a fluff yarn, like the yarn is just fluff that you know, it's very soft,

Stacey Winklepleck 13:01

so we can't let it go by we have to actually talk about our favorite pattern in Wonder Fluff which is Professor Meow. I think that is our number one pattern. It's by Claire Slade. It's been around for years, but it still is so popular. I love that pattern so much.

Lee Meredith 13:17

Yeah, it's very cute. One of my first introductions to knitpicks patterns was tabling at Stitches in Pasadena like a month after I started working and there was a fashion show and the professor meow sweater got modeled down the runway and everyone loved it. I was like, Ah, that's so cute.

Stacey Winklepleck 13:37

Yeah, it was that way. I remember when we when we were doing shows we always brought that sample with us and it because we wanted people to like doing the shows. We wanted people to be able to feel the yarn and wonderful off is definitely a yarn you have to feel to believe like yeah, it's so so soft. But

Lee Meredith 13:55

and it's a it's a good one for bulky patterns that that are wearable because it's so because of the construction of the fiber being blown through the tube or whatever. It's it's a really lightweight yarn. So you get a bulky gauge and all the holes are filled in you know, it doesn't look too holey or open. You know, it fills in but it feels like very lightweight to where I was so of course it's warm because of the alpaca but it's not it doesn't feel like dense on your body. You know? Yeah, it's very wearable.

Stacey Winklepleck 14:26

Yeah, actually going back to Windfall as we're talking. The cover sweater is in a Wonder Fluff off the Cloud Sweater, which is like, everyone's favorite sweater. I remember we got that in the sample in and everyone was dying over it. So

Lee Meredith 14:39

yeah, it's so comfy. So we talked about bulky, we talked about super bulky bit. I didn't cover everything. But yeah, we don't have very many super bulky but then if you want to go even heavier than that. There's actual roving which you can like knit with kind of. Like I've seen things done with it. There's those like Pinterest-y instagram-y like blankets that oh man people sell that are like knit with roving and I feel like they're not practical like if you actually made it, it would fall apart maybe. But there's probably tutorials online you can find to figure out how to do it. Have you ever tried like knitting with roving?

Stacey Winklepleck 15:23

No, but I can tell you that people when that blanket was going around social media, how many of my non knitter friends sent that? To make it for them. So Jeez. I think it's a lovely piece, but I can't imagine actually knitting it. I do know arm knitting is something that's really popular with that kind of weight. I've never tried it myself.

Lee Meredith 15:47

It seems like a fun project. If you have a kid who wants to learn how to knit it's a good like introduction to knitting. Without needles. I've also never done it.

Stacey Winklepleck 15:56

But we're just like,

Lee Meredith 15:58

you know what I you know, what I have used droving for is spinning, which is what it's actually meant for. So I do spend and I've used our Wool of the Andes Roving to spin, and it's great. So I can't personally recommend roving for knitting because I haven't tried it, but I can recommend it for spinning.

Stacey Winklepleck 16:18

I have tried to spin so many times. over my years at KnitPicks, everyone has tried to get me to spin and I found my drop my drop spindle and I'm like, I have one. See, I've tried it. So

Lee Meredith 16:32

Yeah, but drop spindles are very hard. So I can I can teach how to use the wheel at work one day If you want, we have a wheel at work. And I AB it's

Stacey Winklepleck 16:44

I enjoyed being the anti spinner at work. So

Lee Meredith 16:49

I feel like the current generation at work, I'm the only spinner so yeah, you can join my side and learn how to do it if you want

Stacey Winklepleck 16:58

But speaking of spinning,

Lee Meredith 17:00

yeah, so we're gonna hear an interview that I did with Michael Smith, and we're going to talk about a bunch of stuff, including spinning and Michael is a newer spinner who's kind of just learned how to spin so if you are someone out there listening who has never spun before, just try it at once it this is this would be a good interview for you. It's a real kind of intro to like how to get started kind of thing. Yeah. So maybe Stacey, you could listen to the interview. it'll inspire you.

Stacey Winklepleck 17:30

Okay.

Heather Mann 17:38

Heather here. Hey, producer Sarah, have you heard about the Summer Sale?

Sarah Nairalez 17:42

Oh, I love sales where

Heather Mann 17:44

the Summer Sale at knitpicks.com and crochet.com. Save up to 60% off on yarn. And it's fun because each week different yarn weights are on sale.

Sarah Nairalez 17:53

Sounds like a good time to stock up on yarn. Oh, wait, what about tools?

Heather Mann 17:58

And you can save up to 40% on tools.

Sarah Nairalez 18:00

Now would be a good time to stock up on supplies for holiday crafting.

Heather Mann 18:03

Oh, and each week there are different deals and freebies with purchase.

Sarah Nairalez 18:07

Oh and love free stuff.

Heather Mann 18:09

Check knitpicks.com and crochet.com to find out all about the Summer Sale looks like

Sarah Nairalez 18:13

I'm going to knit picks.com and crochet.com to stock up and save. This sale goes through July 18 2021.

Lee Meredith 18:25

Hi, today I'm here with Michael Smith. But you may know him on Instagram as Piece for Peace Crafting. Welcome, Michael, you want to introduce yourself? Hi.

Michael Smith 18:36

Yeah, so I'm Michael I'm a dance teacher by day and lover of crafts by night. I think that's how I would introduce myself.

Lee Meredith 18:48

Awesome. What are you known for most within the craft community? Like I know you're on Instagram and YouTube.

Michael Smith 18:56

I think what I'm finding out is that people really enjoy my color since I tend to pick things that I so I knit and crochet and I've just started spinning and for my knitting and crocheting, I think I've been getting a lot of feedback that like my color choices are really good. And so I wouldn't say that I'm known for that.

But I would think that or I think that the feedback I'm getting is my pairing of colors is really good. And so that that's kind of cool.

Lee Meredith 19:25

Cool. Yeah, I would totally agree with that, from what I've seen. And I'm a big color person. I care very much about color choices.

Michael Smith 19:34

Yes. Same.

Lee Meredith 19:35

Yeah. Cool. What is your knitting origin story? How did you when and how did you get into it?

Michael Smith 19:42

So for me getting into knitting actually was about 13 ish years ago. So I say that I'm a dance teacher by day. So my, in my previous life profession, I was a professional dancer. And so Sometimes we would be doing a big ballet where, you know, maybe you have second act off, or you had a lot of downtime, depending on what the ballet was. And I had a friend who, we were just on the side, and he was knitting something for his wife, who was also a dancer in the company. And I was like, oh, that seems really cool. Like if I if you tell me what to get, like, Can you teach me and he was like, sort of side of me a little bit. Like, are you really for real? And I'm like, Yes, totally. And so I went to like my, you know, a big box store and got whatever he told me to get, and he taught me, you know how to knit how to purl. And it took me a little bit to get the hang of it. But yeah, I made a lot of rectangle shapes things for a while and until I really knew what I was doing. And yeah, that that sort of took off from there. The same thing. crocheting a couple years later, two other friends were sitting around and doing some big production, and they were crocheting, like, a pair, just like house slippers. And I was like, Oh, I think I want to learn how to do this now. And they're like, go get these hooks. Obviously, you know how to work with yarn. Like, yeah, and we'll teach you it's like, Okay, cool. And then that became a whole nother world where I was like, this is this is eating up all of my time. But it did. It did make it a very relaxing thing. Like before shows, like, I could sit backstage and just chill out for a moment, because I had this tool. And now that I'm not dancing, it's like, it's such a part of me that. Yeah, it's fun to just like make stuff to make stuff because I want to wear it out. It's cold here.

Lee Meredith 21:42

Awesome. Cool. That's interesting that you like got into knitting first, then you got into crochet then it seems like you kind of dip back to knitting, or do you still do you do them kind of equally now? Or do you do mostly knitting now?

Michael Smith 21:54

I think mostly now I do a lot of knitting. I do crochet stuff every now and then. Just because when I when I took the plunge back into getting into knitting, it was like a for real deep dive, I was learning

about all these designers and different dyers and other places that I can buy things that I think sometimes Well, at least for me was sort of overlooked because I was nervous to try to really break into it. And now I'm just like, I don't care. I want to do all of the things and make all of the things try all of the different fibers and things like that. So yeah, yeah.

Lee Meredith 22:34

Cool. Speaking of trying different fibers today, our broad episode is kind of talking a lot about bulky, super bulky yarns and roving. And I know that you've just kind of more recently jumped into spinning with roving what's your spinning origin story?

Michael Smith 22:54

My spinning origin story is kind of silly. I have two housemates. And so they see me crafting all the time making things and one of them asked me like, Oh, what is I think I was watching a podcast or something. And they were talking about spinning. And he was like, Oh, well, what is that? And so I explained to him what it was like, yeah, it seems really hard. But it's really cool. That you like have to have like, a wheel or a spindle to do like, all this stuff. And you get the roving and whatever explaining it to him. And I just thought it was very casual conversation, just like in our living room. And a couple weeks later, it was my birthday. And he went, he surprised me with a bunch of my other friends and family members, and they got me a spinning wheel for my birthday. So I was like, oh, okay, I didn't know I was into this. But now I'm going to be because you all got this for me.

Lee Meredith 23:52

Oh that's so nice.

Michael Smith 23:55

Yeah, it was like, I wasn't even planning on starting. It just was like, the wheel was gifted to me. And then yeah, I put a call out on Instagram. I was like, Hey, I got this as a gift, like, what do I do now? And so actually, people have one of my really good friends who I follow was like, actually go to KnitPicks and get their roving. It's a great place to start and cool. It'll be Yeah, it'll just be a good tool for you to use to get the hang of it. And so that's literally what I did. I was like, I need all of this so that I start to understand like, what this whole process is.

Lee Meredith 24:32

That's awesome. Yeah, I wonder if that's common for people to kind of like jump into spinning because it's like, you like you can start with a spindle, but a spindles like a lot harder than a wheel actually. So even though it's the lower price point way to start, like a wheel is actually a lot easier to use. So I know for me, I like went to a knit night and someone had a wheel and I said that I was like, Oh, that looks really cool. Like, could you show me how to use it and she showed me, and I was just like, okay, I want one. I went and got a used wheel like I just dove into it headfirst. Yeah,

Michael Smith 25:07

and I think maybe it could be my background in dance too. It's just like this the need, but like the desire to want to learn something new is still in me. And so like, for me, I was like, Okay, I have this wheel. Now let me go try to find a class or watch a couple. I think actually KnitPicks has some videos on their site. And I watched those and just like, try to figure this out. And I already had the hand eye coordination from dancing a little bit from video gaming. So I was like, Alright, this should be easy enough. The first, the first couple go, go arounds were terrible. But like, whatever there, it's gonna be bad because you don't know what you're doing. But once I got the hang of it, it's been like, there's no turning back now.

Lee Meredith 25:59

That's awesome. So what kind of wheel do you have?

Michael Smith 26:03

I have a lendrum double treadle. A collapsible ones. I'm not sure if those are they don't collapse, but mine collapses, which is really cool. So if we needed space in the house, I could just like fold it up and slide it either under our bed or under the couch. Yeah, it's really convenient.

Lee Meredith 26:21

Cool. Alright, so you mentioned that you kind of started with Wool of the Andes Roving that it was a good fiber to start with. Did you then like branch out into more other kinds of roving? Are there kinds of fiber at all? Or do you stick with wool?

Michael Smith 26:35

Yes, so I started there. And then Instagram is an amazing place, but it's also can be a terrible place. Right? So like, people love tagging me and enabling me to buy all the things. So I I started, like, I've worked with Falkland a little bit. And some merino, and actually the one of the last things I spun was a blend of like Merino Yak and silk, which was really wild. Wow. And because I don't know what's difficult, you know, I just, oh, this is gonna be fun. And that one, that one was a little difficult because it was so slippery. But once I like, you know, just sort of calm down. It was like, Alright, tension is key, like, just take your time, you're not in a rush to do anything or to like to spin this just like, chill out. This is supposed to be relaxing. It ended up it ended up working out and it's, I'm looking at and it's one of my favorite skeins that I've done so far. Yeah, but that was a challenge, just like not having it be a little toothy or grippy. To have those like slicker fibers in there was kind of was a little bit of a challenge averse.

Lee Meredith 27:53

Yeah, I brought back a memory of like, very early in my spinning. I got some cotton like roving, like prepared cotton roving, and I didn't know that it would be very difficult to spin. Like, it's so much harder than wool.

Michael Smith 28:07

what makes it difficult to spin?

Lee Meredith 28:09

Okay, so this is like 10 years ago, but my memory is that the the staple length of the cotton was very short. And it was also very smooth and not grabby. So it would like break apart like super easily, easily. Yeah. So it's hard to like, call that together. So I spent this like very small Hank, and I was like that. That's it. That's all I can do, and I never used it.

Michael Smith 28:34

It just sits in like, you know, the stash has a memory of like, this happened at one point.

Lee Meredith 28:40

Totally. Yeah. Yeah. So speaking of sitting in your stash, have you knit with your hand spun yet?

Michael Smith 28:49

No, not yet. No really, like, I really want to and my my housemate who was a part of the whole, getting my friends in and on getting the wheel for me. He doesn't craft. I mean, he he's in the arts. So he's a little bit nerdy too. I think he's so excited to see me make something with it. So we were like, what are you going to make with this? What are you going to make this and I'm like, you need to calm down. I don't need this kind of pressure in my life. But as I'm, as I'm getting, or acquiring more like skeins, from what I've spun, I am now starting to feel like okay, you could probably make like a shawl out of what you have. And that's starting starting to get really exciting, like, oh, now if I just had this color. It would totally work. So I think it's gonna happen soon. It just hasn't happened yet.

Lee Meredith 29:48

Cool. I'm excited to see what happens.

Michael Smith 29:50

I would love any recommendations for hand spun patterns and things.

Lee Meredith 29:57

Something I like doing to like, make it stretch further is striping with like a non hand spun like a really basic like natural like one of our, like Simply Wool or something just like on guide or like striping back and forth. Can you know double the?

Michael Smith 30:11

Yeah. Okay.

Lee Meredith 30:14

yardage or whatever and make it kind of like stamped, like make the colors pop more, you know off like that neutral base.

Michael Smith 30:20

Yeah, totally

Lee Meredith 30:21

Well, yeah, I've made like a lot of hats and accessories out of like single skeins, I've made like a cropped cardigan out of like, several skeins of the same type of fibers spun off, like color blocks. Yeah, I have plans for sweaters with like, doing yoke, detail enhancement, and then the rest of it like in a solid. Yeah.

Michael Smith 30:44

I'm, that's on my, like, in my head, it's in my queue of things that like I think would be really awesome to do. Just like all the color work is handspun. The rest of it is from you know, whatever. Yeah,

Lee Meredith 30:57

I love that I love that really like calling attention to the hand spun of like, it's this detail that your eye goes to, and then you pay attention to like the color variation.

Michael Smith 31:06

Yeah, totally, totally.

Lee Meredith 31:08

Cool. So I know for me when I have I have kind of a clunky wheel that's like, especially good for heavier yarn. So like, I can't really spend like a plied fingering weight with mine. So most of what I spend tends to be like a worsted or Aran weight, or even like a bulky weight. And I I think for newer spinners, it's, it's pretty common to do like more of a worsted. But I know you knit a lot with fingering weights, do you try to spend fingering weight?

Michael Smith 31:35

Yeah, so for me, just getting started, I was noticing that a lot of what I was spinning was like sort of around the DK worsted area, which is great, like, honestly, because I'm, I'm so new to it, I was like, I will use whatever or like I want to make whatever. But that idea of of knowing that I use a lot of fingering weight was like, Okay, this is gonna be the goal, like you have to be able to do this. So I think for me, I've really just been trying to push myself in making that happen. So not being afraid to Yeah, just not being afraid to like try to really focus on like making the singles small enough so that when they're plied together, it becomes like the fingering weight that I want and be the last. The last one that I just did is a three ply, and I'm almost positive, but it's a fingering weight. And I couldn't be more excited because it's so beautiful. Like, wow, that one I was like, Okay, this has to be something I'm gonna make something out of this because it's so gorgeous. Like,

Lee Meredith 32:49

that's impressive.

Michael Smith 32:51

It's so cool. I mean, obviously, it's only been a few months, but it's like, I tell myself, you're going to do this for 15 minutes a day. It's a big 30, like, cool, whatever. And so just that like practicing of trying to get it just a little bit smaller, a little bit smaller. And in my head knowing like or thinking when this and this is together, it will make that is really been helpful. So yeah, I'm trying, working on it at least.

Lee Meredith 33:20

Cool. So you said that's a three ply? Is it like three plies? kind of plied normally? Or is it a chain ply?

Michael Smith 33:28

I did. So I've done chain pies before, but this one is like a traditional three ply. So yeah, it was crazy. I took a braid and split it. And then I had a neutral. That was something else that was only like two ounces. Right? And so I just did them each individually and then sat there and plied the three together. It was it was like a rough project for myself to see if I could actually do it.

Lee Meredith 33:54

Yeah, I don't get I don't think I've ever I've been spinning for like 15 or not 15 but like 13 years, I think I don't think I've ever done a three ply. I've just done chain ply. Yeah. Cool. It seems like Well, my wheel only has to like kind of places for bobbins to go, whatever they's called. So I'd have to like have a separate place for the third one. Yeah, that just seems like very advanced.

Michael Smith 34:21

Well, the mine came with a I'm not sure what it's called either. But like I can set three bobbins on. Okay, whatever that thing is. Is it a lazy kate? Is that what it's called? I think so. Like maybe. So I can set three and then I was like alright, cool. I'm gonna I want to try this. I have to do I have to do it because cool. Yeah, because I don't know any different. I don't know what's hard. I don't know. I'm just like, I'm gonna try all the things like I thought chain plying was hard, actually. But it ended up being so fun once you get into the groove of it.

Lee Meredith 34:56

exactly. Totally like doing it for the first time that you've never before you're kind of like, how is this right? And then once you once you do a couple chains, you're like, yeah, looking good. I love I love that attitude of just like, I want to try it. So I will. One of my biggest kind of like craft pet peeves is like someone out in the world, you know, a stranger like complimenting you on something you made, and you say you made it. And they're like, "Oh, I could never do that." Or the worst is even. I wish "I wish I could do that." Because I'm always just like, you can just do it.

Michael Smith 35:28

Right. Right. Totally. It's just a little bit of practice. And you can do it.

Lee Meredith 35:33

Yeah, that's what I always say, with sewing clothes, too, because I sew my own clothes. And I get I get that a lot. And I say it's just practice. You just have to learn, learn how to do it, and then you do it.

Michael Smith 35:43

Right.

Lee Meredith 35:45

Yeah.

Michael Smith 35:46

What is that? Why do we get in our heads about things like that, like, thinking? We're like, we're like downplaying ourselves before we've even tried it.

Lee Meredith 35:54

Yeah, I think part of it is just kind of like a personality type. But then part of it also might be like a bummer of just like past experience of like being afraid of failure, right? failure is part of life, and it's gonna happen.

Michael Smith 36:10

Totally, and a part of moving forward, right? Like, yeah, you make a pair of socks, they look awful. And then you're like, Okay, well, at least I learned why these look awful.

Lee Meredith 36:19

Right?

Michael Smith 36:19

And the next time around like, I can tweak it, and they'll just be they'll get better.

Lee Meredith 36:24

Yeah, totally. It's, it's learning from your mistakes, and also, like gaining muscle memory and gaining experience to move forward into the next. Yeah. Yeah. So what do you like about spinning, like, especially kind of compared to knit and crochet, if those are like, kind of your three main things like, what, what stands out about spinning, it's like, different that you like?

Michael Smith 36:48

I think it's, it's like, same, same, but different, right? That like relaxation, feeling of the process of making something, I but in a in a different way, I do think that like this, the repetitive motion of spinning is just different, right? And you can really just like zone out, after a while, like, you know, you're you're doing whatever kind of draw, you enjoy doing. And you're just focused on that. And especially because I

have a double treadle, so like, my feet are going, my hands are going at the same time. And so it's it's kind of hypnotizing, I guess. And it's that, to me is really comforting. I found that I really liked doing it in the morning. So getting up sort of starting, like the practice of starting my day that way, in this really calm, almost meditative way. Just like with a cup of tea cup of coffee, and just like I'm going to spin for 15 minutes just to like get my, my body going. My brain going waking up. I actually have the wheel set up in our sunroom right now. So it's like the day is really starting. And then there's me being a little crafter sitting with my tea, like starting my day. Like it's like a little meditation, I guess, which is really cool.

Lee Meredith 38:17

Cool. Yeah, I totally agree with it being more of like a zone out kind of craft. Like, I like spinning while watching a movie or something that I like, want to pay more attention to like for knitting as always, like, if I'm going to be knitting, I can't watch like, a movie I care too much about, right. That's it's like, totally playing sucking it or something. But um, with spinning, you can just like really kind of focus on what you're watching. So

Michael Smith 38:43

Totally, I agree.

Lee Meredith 38:46

So for anyone out there who's hearing this, and who's like, I think I might want to take the leap into trying out spinning. Do you have advice for them?

Michael Smith 38:58

I would say if you if like a wheel is accessible to you to just like, try out, just try it. And like have someone sort of walk you through those basic steps. And then give it a whirl. And don't be hard on yourself, like the first few times. Like, if you go into it, knowing that it's going to be terrible, the first couple times can like laugh at yourself, then I think it makes it better because you are learning something new, you know, so like, Okay, I know I'm going to be bad at this. But like, I do want to give it a try. I say go for it. Like I want to I would like to try a spindle now because I feel like I'm going the other way. I feel like people go from a spindle to a wheel. Maybe that's not true. So I would like to try that. And I'm just like, well, if this is bad, it's bad. But at least I'm trying something. So if you have access, try it out. Yeah. And then don't be too hard on yourself. Like it's it's silly at first. And you have to know that it's gonna be silly. And then if you'd like it, I say take the plunge. Do it do it do it.

Lee Meredith 40:09

I agree. And I did start with a spindle just because you know, spindle is so much more accessible, you know, financially, and like space and stuff. But it is a lot more difficult. It's I, I spent a couple scans of the spindle and they did not look good. As soon as I tried a wheel. I was like, Oh my gosh, it's so much easier. So don't if you if you have access to a spindle and you try it and you don't like it. Think about the reasons why you don't like it and they might not translate to a wheel.

Michael Smith 40:40

Yes. Also to E spinners. I know that's really big now too. And like,

Lee Meredith 40:45

Oh, yeah,

Michael Smith 40:46

I would be interested in trying that to like not having to move your feet just to focus on the drafting. I'm sure it's a completely different experience as well.

Lee Meredith 40:56

Yeah. Yeah. I've never tried that. So for if people don't know, that's basically an electronic spinning wheel that kind of like sits on a table and it just has like, the spinning part. That's done electronically. So you're, yeah, it's just on top of the table, right? Yeah. Yeah. Yeah, I've seen them in action at like fiber festivals. It's like, Whoa, high tech spinning.

Michael Smith 41:24

Right. That's funny. You're like truly a machine at that point. You know like, you're literally just feeding into it. That's so funny.

Lee Meredith 41:34

Yeah, but like you said, You're still drafting. So you're still like in control of how it looks?

Michael Smith 41:39

Yeah, totally. Yeah, totally.

Lee Meredith 41:42

Cool. All this was super fun. I'm gonna tell people to check out your Instagram feed because it's beautiful. You. I know you recently said in a YouTube video that you don't think you're a fast knitter. But if you're not a fast knitter, you must be knitting all hours. Sure, finish a lot of amazing projects. Very impressive. So yeah, if people want to find you, can you tell people a bit about your YouTube channel or video podcasts? Whatever you call?

Michael Smith 42:13

Yeah, so people can find me on Instagram at Piece 4 Peace. And that's like a piece of paper. So P I EC the number four peace, like peace on earth. crafting is my Instagram handle. And then I have a little podcast over on YouTube, which is Piece 4 Peace crafting Podcast, where I just share all my makes what I'm working on. There's a lot of giggling laughing at myself. Yeah, check it out. It's a good time. I try to, you know, be positive and fun about it. It's just crafting, so we shouldn't beat ourselves up too much about it. It should just be a fun, relaxing hobby.

Lee Meredith 42:55

Totally. Love Your attitude. I'm gonna say those are both gonna be linked in the show notes. So you don't worry about writing those down. Just go to our blog post or podcast app show notes and you'll find those. It was so fun to talk to you. Yeah,

Michael Smith 43:09

it was nice talking to you, too.

Lee Meredith 43:11

Yeah, I love your color. And I love your attitude about crafting. I feel like we have a very similar attitude. I've just like yes more more of this, but just dive in positivity. It's not always going to be perfect. Get laugh at yourself.

Michael Smith 43:28

Yeah, we should all laugh at ourselves a little bit more.

Lee Meredith 43:32

Totally.

Stacey Winklepleck 43:35

This podcast was originally created by Kelly Petkun.

Lee Meredith 43:39

It is produced and hosted by me Lee Meredith and Stacy Winklepleck

Stacey Winklepleck 43:44

with additional content from Michael Smith also known as peace for peace crafting.

Lee Meredith 43:49

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Stacey Winklepleck 43:55

Production assistance by Remy Ostermiller

Lee Meredith 43:58

transcripts by Michele Fitzgerald.

Stacey Winklepleck 44:01

We recorded this in the Pacific Northwest where our cats want to be on the show too.

Lee Meredith 44:07

big thank you to our friends at Connecting Threads podcast and WeCrochet podcast where we're all keeping the craft in crafting.

Stacey Winklepleck 44:16

from everyone here at KnitPicks. Thank you for joining us.

Lee Meredith 44:19

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Stacey Winklepleck 44:31

All the yarn, tools, and patterns mentioned in this episode, along with all the inspiration a knitter can need can be found on our website at knitpicks.com.

Lee Meredith 44:41

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Stacey Winklepleck 45:04

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Lee Meredith 45:12

rate and review us wherever you listen to this podcast.

Stacey Winklepleck 45:16

Until next time, happy crafting.

Lee Meredith 45:21

Sorry

Stacey Winklepleck 45:22

why is everything laughing?

Lee Meredith 45:23

I think I think Carl could be heard

Stacey Winklepleck 45:27

Is that what it was?

Knit Picks Podcast Episode 346

An Ode to Chunky Yarns & Get Excited About Spinning with Michael Smith

Carl (cat) 45:29

Meow