

(fashion)

BUY THE WAY by Lindsay Shen

wool gathering

Shanghai's most covetable handknits



Lindsay Shen



shokay

Doing good is looking good. Shokay was founded by a group of friends and classmates as a sustainable poverty alleviation project. Super-soft hand-combed yak down is sourced directly from Tibetan herders, and crafted into a select range of home textiles, accessories and baby wear, now sold internationally. Shokay works with villagers in Qinghai province and handknitters on Chongming Island north of Shanghai, providing fair wages, and returning a portion of profits back to the communities to support education and health. Designs are typically bold and graphic, such as their 'infinity cable' motif, which appears on pillows and scarves, or the strikingly patterned 'honeycomb' pillow, whose color combinations may be custom ordered. ■

Available at Platane, 127 Yongfu Lu (www.shokay.com)

lorolana

This Hong Kong-based company aspires to combine the highest traditional craftsmanship with flattering contemporary design. Limited-edition sweaters are handknitted in Santou, Guangdong, and cleverly shaped with ribbing and cables, demolishing knitting's persistent associations with 'chunky and shapeless'. Rather than oatmeal homespun, expect gloriously vibrant shades of tangerine, ruby and leaf green. Fibers range from plush sheep's wool to fine mohair to soft cotton. A small range of tops are crocheted in novelty yarns such as variegated ribbon. The "color therapy meets retail therapy" experience is complemented by attentive staff who seem to possess an unflinching instinct for selecting garments that suit customers' body types and coloring. ■

Rm 217, 2/F, City Center, 100 Zunyi Lu, Hongqiao; Rm 07, 3/F, Super Brand Mall, 158 Lujiacui St Lu, Rm 21A, 4/F, Grand Gateway, Hongqiao Lu, Hongqiao (www.lorolana.com)

puppy

Alpaca, kid, sheep, silkworm... no puppy! The associations work, though. Warm, soft, sometimes exuberant, Puppy's clothing and yarns offer an antidote to the damp grey chill of a Shanghai winter. This Japanese company has been plying fiber since 1960 and the shelves are stocked with an array of Japanese merino and cashmere yarns, in addition to luxury fibers from France, Italy and the United States. The sample garments showcasing the beauty of these yarns and the dexterity of local knitters may be purchased; alternatively, select your yarn and have an item custom-made - an otherwise out-of-reach luxury as handknitting is highly labor intensive. Or, knit your own creations. Naoki Shimabara, Puppy's Shanghai Director, speculates that while knitting in China has been seen primarily as a utilitarian skill, it's becoming more valued for its therapeutic and artistic qualities. ■

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