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Black-Owned Yarn Shops and Dyers to Network with Today

by Clark Tate | Aug 10, 2020



A skein of nude yarn hand-dyed by BzyPeach's Laverne Benton.

As today's chaos increases, many of us turn to our crafts and the communities we've built around them for support and the solace that creative labor provides. Our struggles and triumphs can be shared here. Today, we'd like to celebrate six talented Black women dyers, designers and yarn shop owners working hard to realize their dreams and build a much more beautiful world in the process.



Michele Morris from Woolly Jumper Yarns.

Woolly Jumper Yarns

Floyd, Virginia

Ten years ago, in rural Floyd County, Virginia, knitters couldn't simply run out for nice yarn to start a new project. Michele Morris opened Woolly Jumper Yarns to change that. For locals, that means having high-quality national brands like Brown Sheep and Blue Sky Fibers at their fingertips. For tourists, it means unique and

lovely local offerings. Woolly Jumper carries regionally hand-dyed yarns from places like Unplanned Peacock Studio, with their flock of Icelandic sheep, and Fluff du Jour's hand-spun and dyed, bulky-weight yarn, which Morris describes as "gorgeous".

While she recently launched an online store, it doesn't list her local offerings. "They're the kind of things you need to see in person to really appreciate," says Morris. Don't hesitate to call, email, or DM to get a photo tour. Woolly Jumper has a strong inclusivity ethos and seeks to inspire young people to pick up the craft. As Morris puts it, "we want to be welcoming for everyone."

Website – woollyjumperyarns.com

Instagram – [@woollyjumperyarns](https://www.instagram.com/woollyjumperyarns)

Mother of Purl

Viroqua, Wisconsin

Lauren McElroy wakes up every day to her dream life, taking fibers from “farm to yarn” to create wearable art. She supports herself from scratch — hand skirting the fleece, washing and carding it, combing and dyeing it, and then spinning. With names like Mermaid Dreams and Cortinarius Semisanguineus (a type of mushroom), each charming skein is an absolute original. She releases a new one on the first of the month.

McElroy also knits and designs. She thinks of selling her inventive patterns as selling an experience, encouraging you to push yourself to make each creation your own and tailor it to fit your shape and preferences. Aside from making, she also teaches and offers support for those beautiful, and complex, pattern projects.

Website – www.motherofpurl.net

Instagram – [@motherofpurl1](https://www.instagram.com/motherofpurl1)



Lauren McElroy of Mother of Purl.



Diane Ivey of Lady Dye Yarns.

Lady Dye Yarns

Boston, Massachusetts

After a fistful of degrees and 16 years of non-profit work, Diane Ivey founded Lady Dye Yarns, a crafting company committed to including and encouraging Black, Indigenous, and People of Color. Ten years later, she's built a thriving business known for its saturated and sophisticated hand-dyed yarn, inclusive and galvanizing activism, and crafting kits and yarn club collaborations.

The clubs and kits combine yarn from Lady Dye with patterns and accessories from participating BIPOC designers and crafters. This year, Lady Dye launched the popular [emPower People campaign](#), which sells bandana kits encouraging folks to engage in the political process. They also have a Schitts Creek Club. Who says raising each other up can't be fun?

In August, Ivey will launch Rebel with a Cause. "It's an online platform that is a news source as well as a social media source," says Ivey. It will pull news stories from trusted sources, while also providing forums for discussion. An accompanying podcast will cover topics like inclusion and healthcare, all centered on crafting. Ivey will tour yarn shops to lead similar conversations in person next year. With this momentum and trajectory, she has nowhere to go but up. "I'm very happy to not only be an indie dyer but also to be contributing to the overall systematic changes that need to happen in the industry."

Website – ladydye.com

Instagram – [@ladydye](https://www.instagram.com/ladydye)

Dye Hard Yarns

Oak Park, Illinois

Dye Hard Yarns is a self-described small shop building an outsized community of creators in Chicago. Owner Chastity Dunlap seeks to center it around joy and building one another other up. “It’s really about people helping people,” she says. To support local crafters, Dye Hard raised over \$30,000 to build a community dye studio. Classes there are on hold due to COVID, but the shop is still bringing people together online.

Dye Hard has two weekly online events, Fiber Fun Night every Wednesday evening and Queer Stitch on Sunday afternoons, both via Zoom. Dunlap also helped organize this year’s socially distanced Chicago Yarn Crawl and offers project support via zoom or Facebook messenger. The shop is currently encouraging online or video concierge shopping where you’ll see a wide selection of indie hand-dyed yarns on bases ranging from wool, cotton and cashmere to linen, silk and bamboo.

Website – dyehardyarns.com

Instagram – [@dyehardyarns_op](https://www.instagram.com/dyehardyarns_op)



Chastity Dunlap of Dye Hard Yarns.



Laverne Benton from BzyPeach.

BzyPeach

Atlanta, Georgia

BzyPeach's owner Laverne Benton loves to create and it shows. Her hand-dyed, 100% Pima cotton yarn spans a rainbow of vibrant colors named after fruits. And you learn something new with every description. Who knew that there is a Black Diamond apple from the Tibet Autonomous Region, that a Jamun plum is delicious in mocktails, or that the yarns they are named after could be so uniquely winsome?

Bzy also sells project and fiber art journals and is part of the emPower People campaign. Her website is already cheering for this fall's #CreativeSprint, a month of prompts to help you "reboot and prime the creative pump." She shares thirty-one Pinterest-worthy slides take you through daily creativity challenges. Benton enjoys the activities and the comradery, saying, "I do love the fact that we can build family and community around our love of fiber."

Website – bzypeach.com

Instagram – [@bzypeach](https://www.instagram.com/bzypeach)

Chicken Coop Dyeworks

Carolyn Jones adores color and is determined to offer innovative and compelling combinations on lux yarn bases like silk, merino, polwarth, and blue face Leicester. Her background in chemistry and art lend themselves to the work. “For me, dyeing is another expression of my watercolor,” she says. “I just like to experiment and get my hands dirty.”

Her online shop carries various blends, each with a fun coop-themed title like chicken feet (75% superwash merino, 25% nylon) or beaks (50% merino, 50% silk). By next year, she’ll be adding fibers from her very own flock of Rambouillet sheep.

The Coop also has a thing for kits that give back. There’s the elegant shawl pattern benefiting breast cancer charity Knitted Knockers, [emPower People’s](#) purple bandana kit and a #BLM kit, benefiting [ActBlue](#) and the [Luke 4:18 Bail Fund](#) with a beautiful red, black and green speckled skein.

Website – coopdye.com

Instagram – [@chickencoopyeworks](https://www.instagram.com/chickencoopyeworks)



Carolyn Jones of Chicken Coop Dye Works with her grandchildren.



Clark Tate

contributor

Clark Tate is a freelance writer and lifelong knitter. After graduating from never-ending scarves to more complex projects, Clark also graduated with a Master's in Environmental Science. She then worked as a restoration ecologist for six years, before moving on to an obsession with braided hats and writing articles about people and the environments they live in. She's written for Hakai Magazine, Summit Daily News, Salt Lake City Weekly, and [GearLab.com](https://gearlab.com). You can find further examples of her work at lclarktate.com.

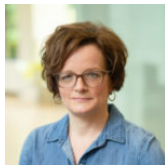
24 Comments



Carolyn on August 12, 2020 at 10:50 am

There's also Neighborhood Fibre Company in Baltimore.
<https://neighborhoodfiberco.com/>

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on August 12, 2020 at 2:55 pm

A fantastic shop!

Reply



Jan on May 8, 2021 at 11:57 am

Yes. Great yarn nice staff.

Reply



Threads & Ewe on August 12, 2020 at 1:26 pm

Threads & Ewe is another Black Owned Online Yarn and Fabric Store.

We would love your support!! <https://threadsandewe.com>

PS

Love Chicken Coop Dyeworks!!

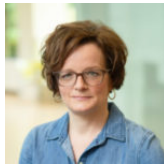
Reply



Carolyn Jones on August 13, 2020 at 9:29 pm

And I love Threads & Ewe!!!!

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on August 14, 2020 at 3:12 pm

Thank you so much for adding to this list!

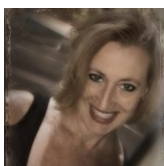
Reply



CAB on June 11, 2022 at 2:36 pm

There is also Yarn Shoppe Denver in downtown Denver, CO for 11 years. CAB 😊

Reply



Andrea on August 21, 2020 at 11:44 pm

Nice article. Nice in the sense that is cool to see people overcoming challenges and limits set by ignorant people in their communities. It would have been a positive article to read based on each women's story, the color of their skin impacted the article in no way. You

included a picture of each woman so we could all see they are black, why did you include their ethnicity in the title?

If you are trying to make a contribution to making this world a better place with fewer race issues or if you are trying to change biases or if you want to promote awareness to the social injustices in our world, then you might consider writing an article that names all of the creative business and organizations that still discriminate against specific ethnicities, races, genders or education levels. I don't know any of the businesses highlighted in your article, and you did not say they only work with black people, but I am guessing they have no boundaries as to who they work with or to whom they sell their products and services to. And because of any struggles they've endured, I'm guessing they would not even turn away a person who worked against them in the past.

I am white. I would shop in their businesses if they had something I needed, and if I were treated with respect, I would return there to shop again. Would any of them turn me away? I do not believe so. However, if I treated them rudely or was disrespectful in any way they might refuse me entry, but they would not turn me away because of the color of my skin.

So, I must also ask, why did you publish this article now? Are you jumping on some bandwagon? Are you wanting to be seen as someone who writes about current events? This article is well-written, and it could be published at any time. It introduces us to a group of women who should be recognized because of their accomplishments and because each of their businesses are unique in some way, not because they are black.

Where does all this color announcing stop? What is going to be your next article about? A group of Arabian women who have come up through the many social injustices they endure to build up their own businesses? And then who, what ethnicity will you write about next?

When you author articles that introduce us to different white women who have created successful craft related companies, you don't include the word "white" in the title, do you? No, the article is usually named something like, "A new Crafters Selling Platform You Simply Must Try", and in this article you would explain to us what makes this new platform and how it is unique and how we could benefit from using it, none of the reasons listed would be that all the women involved are white. Am I correct?

I own a small landscaping company and if I were to be featured in a landscaping publication I would not want the article to make a point of saying that I am a woman, or that I am white. There are tons of women in landscaping. I would want them to focus on what I do well and why my customers love me (none of which would say because I am a white woman). There are thousands and thousands of successful black women in this country, should they all get an article written about them? Really, when does this stop? Did the women in your article know what the title was going to be when you interviewed them? If I had to guess, they would prefer to show off their businesses and their products because of the creativity, individuality, and the quality of the product they're bringing to the world of crafters. I am certain they are not wanting people to buy their products because they are black.

I don't want to spur on a social debate of any sort, I just wanted to say that I was going to read this article simply because you sent it to me, the color of the women featured is of no consequence to me. And if I were a person who knitted or crocheted, I would shop the businesses named, solely because of the uniqueness of their products, not because of the owner's skin color. And, I am guessing, that the thousands of black crafters in your community would have read the article even if the title didn't include the words "black women." You see, the majority of us want good things to happen to other people, and as crafters and entrepreneurs, we're always looking for new ways

to do something better, or more efficiently, or at a lesser cost, and we'll take that advice from anyone who is willing to share it. We do not care what color that person is. If I had a million dollars, I would bet that the women in the article would want me to read about them and their successes and be a customer regardless of their color. I could be wrong, but I doubt it.

As a country who is supposed to be accepting and respectful of other human beings, and who has made great strides regarding equal rights, articles like this one sure don't demonstrate such beliefs or standards. Like I said, unless your next article will be titled "These {white, Asian, Mexican, etc} Women..." you should consider not placing emphasis on race or color in any of your articles.

Should I be offended? Should I go out and get a group of white people to protest, destroy and commit violence against others? Of course not, I bet you're thinking to yourself that to do so would be ignorant aren't you? Of course you are, and of course, you would be right.

Hmmm...well that's all, I'll get off my high horse now, just wanted to give you something to think about.

[Reply](#)

Rhy Doucette on November 16, 2020 at 12:45 am

i think you ARE ignorant and you miss the point – it's an article specifically to support Black businesses, it would be ridiculous not to mention the race of the owners. there's nothing wrong or pretentiously noble about wanting to support businesses owned by historically and currently marginalized communities, especially in today's climate. there IS something wrong and pretentiously noble (perhaps even racist!) with seeing an article like this and immediately getting offended and defensive. please remove yourself from the picture for two

minutes. ignoring race won't make the systems that uphold bigoted attitudes and institutions go away, nor will it make it so that a person's race isn't an inherent part of them (and therefore important and worthy of respect). in other words ignoring race won't make racism go away, and it's the very privileged position you hold as a white person that even allows you to think that's even a possibility. the absolute least – THE LEAST – we can do as white people is to uplift and support marginalized voices, and it is deeply embarrassing that you are not only incapable of, but seem to want to prevent other people from doing, the absolute bare minimum. i truly hope you self-reflect.

i can't believe that your comment has been left up for what appears to be 4 months now. this website can do better and so can you.

[Reply](#)

Cidney Calloway on December 10, 2020 at 11:22 am

@ RhyDoucette YOU GO, RHY!!! You hit the nail on the head in one fell swoop.

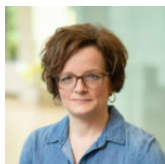
@AndreaD, I HIGHLY suggest you read...

Here's a list:

"White Fragility" x Robin DiAngelo

"So You Want to Talk About Race" x Ijeoma Oluo

"How to be an AntiRacist" x Ibram X. Kendi

[Reply](#)

Abby Glassenberg on November 16, 2020 at 12:05 pm

We are an organization devoted to helping creative business owners thrive. For Black people in America business

ownership is important on so many levels. Today's wealth gap in our country originates from Jim Crow-era practices of job discrimination and segregation in homeownership. Owning a business creates wealth and assets. Second, owning a business strengthens local economies, creating jobs. I encourage you to review [this study](#) by the Association for Enterprise Opportunity to better understand the work that needs to be done. Black-owned businesses face greater challenges accessing start-up capital and loans to get their businesses off the ground as well. Our organization is [committed to diversity and inclusion](#). We are at a pivotal time in our nation's history. It is all of our responsibility, and frankly it is also our joy, to support the Black-owned businesses in our community.

[Reply](#)

Cidney Calloway on December 10, 2020 at 11:23 am

@AndreaD, I HIGHLY suggest you read...

Here's a list:

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[Reply](#)

Elle Arra on January 17, 2021 at 4:19 pm

There are many of us who want to shop black businesses and black owned products, so for us, having black owned in the title is important to us being able to find the shops and owners. That is exactly how I came to this page, by searching black owned yarn shops. I am a black woman and want to spend more of my dollars in the black communities that need

them so badly. There is nothing racist or anti anyone else about that. I am grateful for this article and I will be sharing it with my friends and followers.

[Reply](#)

Carly on April 4, 2021 at 8:54 am

@andread What a fantastic example of white privilege you have provided here. Read the books listed for you. Try being quiet and listening for a change. Tough for white women, but you can do it.

[Reply](#)

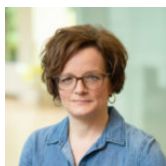
Troye on January 14, 2022 at 6:30 am

So long winded. I am glad you got down off of your high horse. Now look through and support the women who are forging a path for the future of independent enterprising every where. They are bringing their own chair to the table of independent commerce. Bravo! I say.

[Reply](#)

Dallas on October 16, 2020 at 12:53 am

The link to mother of purl goes to the wrong Instagram account

[Reply](#)

Abby Glassenberg on October 16, 2020 at 3:16 pm

Thank you so much for pointing out this error. We've corrected it.

[Reply](#)



Yvonne Printers on January 16, 2021 at 11:10 am

Thank you for this list.

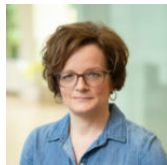
Reply



Renee on November 4, 2020 at 12:09 pm

There's also LolaBean Yarn Company (lolabeanyarnco.com) in Grovetown, GA!

Reply



Abby Glassenberg on November 16, 2020 at 12:08 pm

Yes! LolaBean was recently featured in this fantastic article as well: <https://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2020-10-22/small-business-black-owned-yarn-stores-are-shaking-up-the-industry>

Reply



Norman Schwarze on April 14, 2021 at 11:28 am

Interesting to read the comments here.

As a European, I do find the US-American obsession with “race” difficult to read about. Here in Germany, we finally abolished the word which previously was in our constitution, etc. And I think everyone should make a conscious effort to ban the word from their vocabulary. Categorizing people “you black, me white” only lays the fundament for future harassment – setting aside that the boundaries became very fluent in the past situation, and there is only one human species, and the words “race, black” itself is already racist.

That being said, I do love that you are trying to make a difference in highlighting different designers. Sure, there shouldn't be a new post about minority xyz ever day – because then it will be segregation all

over again. But if it's a spotlight showing ppl "hey..there's more behind the fence and it's just as amazing", then I think it's a very valuable contribution.

[Reply](#)

Amy on November 20, 2021 at 12:35 pm

What applies in Europe often does not apply in other countries! And a Eurocentric world-view is what got the US into the horrific situation we're in now...

Because the US has constitutionally protected treaties with peoples living within it's borders, and because those peoples are trying to survive ONGOING GENOCIDE, simply eliminating a word will not solve the problem of race here. We are a country built by slave labor on stolen land. Racism is built into every ounce of our foundation.

I came here looking for Indigenous and/or Black businesses to support, as people have supported my parents Native American and Black owned businesses in the past. It's a way of contributing to social justice here.

There's plenty of racism in Europe for you to fight, according to friends I have overseas. Maybe sweep your front steps before you worry about ours!

[Reply](#)

Adrienne Oliver on January 25, 2023 at 9:45 am

Sassy Black Yarns out of Manchester, Connecticut.

[Reply](#)

Cassandra Allen - Brown on January 25, 2023 at 3:30 pm



Yarn Shoppe Denver is located in the Central Business District in downtown Denver, CO. Visit us in person: 1615 California St #403 Denver, CO or our Google Page: <https://goo.gl/maps/fWZq5HjX9yU1epiQ6> call us: 720-474-2598 or follow us on IG: @yarnshoppe_denver

Thank you! CAB 😊

Reply

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