

# Perfectly imperfect

On international runways and closer to home, anything lovingly made by human hands, whether embroidered, crocheted or knitted, is having its fashion moment



It seems there's just something scrumptious about creating your very own piece. Americo Original at 456 Queen St. W. sells gorgeous yarns and has created knitting patterns based on trends. The knitting classes are routinely sold out.

"My original idea was to open a home accessories store," says Nicole Sibonney, who opened Americo four years ago. "But when I was sourcing product in Argentina and saw the raw materials for the fabrics, I was so inspired I changed direction." Americo is now mostly a yarn and knitting shop for hobbyists, though there remains a smattering of the original idea in the form of cozy woven blankets and other home accents.

"Knitting allows you to be creative, and it's meditative and therapeutic," says Sibonney, explaining the appeal. "Knitting sort of balances our wants. You can't make anything as fast as you can purchase it. It's good to slow down a little."

Beige hand-knit wool cardigan, \$349, Club Monaco. Below, woven jacket for the Céline spring 2011 collection.

KEITH BEATY/TORONTO STAR

**TRACY NESDOLY**  
SPECIAL TO THE STAR

You might not think that chunky sweater Grandma gave you for Christmas is on the cutting edge of fashion, but you'd be wrong.

The handmade, mistakes and all, is having a major moment.

No less an arbiter of style and trend than Phoebe Philo, Céline's creative director, made news with her spring 2011 collection by sending a handwoven coat down the runway — and "embracing the artisanal" is something that style.com's Nicole Phelps called an unintentional rebuff to the knock-off artists who copy Céline's sleek and minimalist look.

The Stella McCartney spring offerings, found at 119 Corbo in Yorkville, include crochet bags and cro-



PETER STIGTER PHOTO

chet-embellished tanks and even jeans, and British *Vogue* says "granny sweaters are big news again," pointing to Miu Miu sweaters, See by Chloe and Marc by Marc Jacobs coats as evidence in a fashion spread that included some of the hottest It Girls in their best big and chunky knits.

Crediting them with having an unmatched trend-spotting record, style.com asked the founders of Opening Ceremony, the U.S. chain considered a clearing house for international cool, for their predictions for the next 10 years.

Humberto Leon and Carol Lim opined that craftsmanship will be appreciated more and more, and often that means handcrafted.

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