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## Jenny Kee launches Australian Merino wool knitwear collection

Iconic Australian designer Jenny Kee, in collaboration with The Woolmark Company, has created a new limited edition Australian Merino wool capsule collection, reminiscent of her recognisable Australiana knitwear from the 1980s.

Working alongside The Woolmark Company, Kee's new collection, titled A New Beginning, is made from 100 per cent Australian Merino wool and references seminal works from her vintage knitwear, including Blinky Knit which is a modern adaption of the original Koala knit famously worn by Princess Diana on her visit to Australia in 1982 whilst pregnant with Prince William.

For the past 40 years Jenny Kee has remained a remarkable presence within the Australian fashion industry, with a passionately joyous and distinctly Australian approach to her craft.

"As someone who made her name designing quality knitwear it has been a joy to bring my beloved knits back to life. Working with The Woolmark Company has been a very special experience because I was able to work with the finest Italian natural yarn and utilise modern knitting technology in a completely new way. This is a very limited edition capsule collection. Only 50 pieces in each style. Representing my most favourite iconic designs, always inspired by Australia's unique nature! Thank you Woolmark for giving me this wonderful opportunity to create 'A New Beginning' said Jenny Kee.

Through working with The Woolmark Company, Kee has connected with one of the world's most important spinners, Zegna Baruffa. The company is one of Australia's single largest buyers of fine and superfine Merino wool. The Zegna Baruffa premium superfine Merino wool yarn complements Kee's signature style, allowing for an extravaganza of colours and highlighting Merino wool's superb colour fastness.

Previously, Kee would employ up to 40 knitters at a time, which could each have up to 30 balls of yarn to knit one jumper. A New Beginning differs from these original jumpers as digital knitting allows Kee to include an abundance of colour through a streamlined manufacturing process.

"A key element of the partnership was to introduce Jenny to the new technologies available to produce a modern remake of her classic knitwear," explained Melissa Grace, General Manager Marketing & Communications, The Woolmark Company.

"It was a challenging but hugely satisfying experience for Jenny being in Hong Kong and meeting with TWC partner factories who were able to bring this collection to life. We are so pleased to see this collection in store and know that we helped Jenny (re) make a piece of Australian fashion history."

Jenny Kee's A New Beginning Australian Merino wool collection is available in selected speciality stores locally and internationally as well as online at [www.jennykee.com](http://www.jennykee.com).



*Jenny Kee (pictured above) releases a limited edition Merino wool collection, referencing iconic pieces from her archive including the Blinky Knit (below). PHOTOS: Georges Antoni.*

## Jenny Kee knitwear history

"My passion for unusual knitwear started in London working at Chelsea Antique Market for Vernon Lambert in 1967. The first knit I purchased was a Richard Attenborough Fan Club Jumper with all his film titles knitted. I collected elaborate 30's fairisle knits in mint condition I was fascinated by knitting textures and weaving images into knitting.

Back in Australia in 1973 when my Flamingo Park Frock Salon opened and with Winter approaching I thought of my fabulous collection of knits from London. I wanted to create something unique in knitwear in Oz, so using pure Australian Wool, hand-knitted in Australia and decorated with our own Australian graphics my first Ozzie knits were born. I had no idea at the time that this was the beginning of a national Australian style in design.

Two weeks to make and five minutes to sell - the knits were an immediate success. In 1977 I visited Vern Lambert (my mentor) and Anna Piaggi in Milan to show them the fruits of my Australian designs. Anna was enchanted by my knits and devoted a double-page spread in Italian Vogue December 1977 called "Australian Graffiti – a fashion arrives from another hemisphere". Anna wrote "the colours, the ecology, flora and fauna and the paintings of the Aborigines were the fountain of inspiration of one of the most inventive collections of fashion we've seen in recent times".

Anna Piaggi went on to showcase my work by wearing my designs and highlighting them in her magazine Vanity. Her exhibition "Anna Piaggi Fashion-ology" at the V&A Museum London in 2006 featured my "Snake Goddess" knit as one of her 13 favourite outfits ever".

## About The Woolmark Company

The Woolmark is the world's best-known textile fibre brand, established in 1964.

Australian Wool Innovation (AWI), a not-for-profit company owned by more than 25,000 woolgrowers, owns the Woolmark brand. AWI's vision is to be a significant contributor to a vibrant, stable and profitable wool industry providing the world with the best natural fibre. The company works throughout the global supply chain – from woolgrowers through to retailers.

The company mission is to enhance the profitability, international competitiveness and sustainability of the Australian wool industry; and increase demand and market access for Australian wool.

Merino wool provides stability, resilience, softness and luxury to the tailoring industry. The fibre has long been a favourite of designers, but younger consumers, born in an era of 'disposable' fashion know too little about the natural benefits.

Wool is a 100 per cent natural and renewable fibre. Sheep live on grass, water, fresh air and sunshine. Wool is a fibre that is grown – not man-made. Every year sheep produce a new fleece, making wool a renewable fibre source.

