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Stacey (00:03):

Welcome to the Knit Picks podcast. I'm Stacey, and I'm here with Lee.

Lee (00:07):

Hi, Stacey!

Stacey (00:08):

Hi, how you doing?

Lee (00:11):

I'm good. How are you doing? Anything new on your needles?

Stacey (00:15):

Actually, believe it or not, I still haven't finished the other things that I've been talking about for the last couple times, but I did cast on, because I was so inspired by our High Desert photo shoot, I was like, "You know what? I really want to use this yarn. I really want to make a sweater." Because I've used it to make hats. So I'm doing the Barn Staple Vest, knitted.

Lee (00:35):

Nice.

Stacey (00:36):

It's from Form and Function, which I love that book so much.

Lee (00:39):

Yeah, me, too.

Stacey (00:41):

And I didn't really feel like knitting a whole sweater. So a vest is no sleeve land.

Lee (00:46):

Yeah, the sleeves are the most tedious part. So that sounds great.

Stacey (00:49):

Yeah. It's really cool. I've just been doing the ribbon, but I wanted something to knit while I was in meetings or I didn't want to have to stare at a pattern the entire time. So I cast off with this, and I'm very excited.

Lee (01:06):

Yeah, but that's for, if you haven't seen it, it's all kind of texture patterns. And it's like a mish mash of different texture patterns so you don't get bored doing the same chevron for however many feet of knitting or whatever. You're mixing it up and doing one X pattern and then one V pattern. But it's all just knit and purls, right? There's no cables or anything.

Stacey (01:28):

No, and that's why I wanted to do it because I can kind of read my knitting where if I don't have the pattern right next to me, I can kind of see. I'm like, "Well, this is a chevron pattern, or this is a line pattern. I can kind of see how it goes in the purls." Anyway, but that's what I'm working on. What have you been up to?

Lee (01:43):

I love that kind of pattern. Well, I didn't do a lot of knitting this weekend, but I bound off the third border edge of my Hue Shift blanket. So I only have one border edge left. The border is taking as long as... It's taken so long because the rows are so long and tedious, but I do have a family Zoom hangout with my parents and brothers every weekend, and that's a good mindless knitting time where everyone's just kind of talking about movies and TV shows and stuff, and I can just get a chunk of knitting done, and that's what I did yesterday and got the third one done. Yeah, so one down to go, and it'll probably be summer. And then I won't use it until fall. But it'll be there waiting for me for fall.

Stacey (02:27):

Remind me, when did you start the Hue Shift?

Lee (02:31):

Yeah, so I started the Hue Shift really soon after I started working at Knit Picks, which was 2018.

Stacey (02:41):

I remember because I remember when you went and picked out the colors right after you had started.

Lee (02:46):

Yep. I basically started working at Knit Picks in October, basically, October 1st, and then I started the Hue Shift in November because I did the Stitches Show. I went to Pasadena and did Stitches with you, and we have a big Hue Shift sample that hangs up at trade shows back when we used to do trade shows. I spent all weekend looking at it and talking to people about it. I had to learn how the construction works so that I could explain to other people how the construction worked, right? Because everyone kept asking about it. Are all hundred squares seamed? And I had to learn, oh no, it's knit in four quadrants, and you seam the middle. And saying that over and over sold myself on it, and by the end of the weekend, I was like, "I have to pick out colors and cast it on for myself."

Stacey (03:29):

It made me want to do another one after talking about it so much because I'm like, I love mine. Ever since I finished it, I don't know, four years ago, it's still my constant blanket on my couch that I use all the time.

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Lee (03:43):

And I've said this on the podcast before a couple times, but for anyone who hasn't heard this, I found that one single mitered square took exactly the length of one movie, between an hour and half and two hours depending on how closely you're paying attention. So I knit each square to a movie, and then I created a graphic of what movie was watched during each square to add an extra level of motivation. So it helped me get through it. I would go through phases. I would go through a couple months at a time where I was just focused on it and watched three or four movies each weekend and then knit through four squares that weekend. Yeah. I recommend it. [crosstalk 00:04:27] It was a fun way to do it.

Stacey (04:28):

I think it'd be fun.

Lee (04:30):

So today, we have a special interview with Tian Connaughton.

Stacey (04:38):

Yay!

Lee (04:38):

Stacey, you have worked with her before, right? In person.

Stacey (04:42):

Yeah. I've met her a couple of times, actually. She was a designer early on in the independent designer partnership program, which is what I ran full time. That was my job for several years before I started doing the collections, as well. And we both met at TNNA, which is the Need Arts event, industry only event. So there'd be designers, and we went there, and I would just go there and talk to people. And I seem to remember talking to you before you worked here.

Lee (05:14):

Yeah, I was there as an independent designer for a couple years back in 2013, 2014, around there.

Stacey (05:23):

Yeah, something like that. So I met Tian around that time, too. And we had worked together, and she was so cool. And then when we started doing the collections, she has been in several of the collections. And she's always fantastic to work with. Her patterns are so gorgeous and so beautiful and so technically correct, which is great because she is a tech editor, as well, for the entire crochet side. So I worked with her in that a little bit as I started working with collections. And then she also was doing some sample knitting for us early on, especially when we started doing crochet, getting that off the ground. And then couple years ago when we were talking, speaking of Stitches as we were a few minutes ago, we did a show in Connecticut, and she actually worked at our booth and helped with customers.

Stacey (06:17):

It was really a lot of fun. So yes, I have met Tian.

Lee (06:20):

Yeah, it sounds like she kind of does everything related to knit and crochet.

Stacey (06:27):

Yeah. She is...

Lee (06:28):

And she'll talk about that more in the interview, so we don't need to talk over that, but she really is master in the industry, does it all.

Stacey (06:39):

Yeah, and it's not a surprise that she is doing these great classes on how to be a designer and how to get into the designing.

Lee (06:48):

Because she knows it. I feel like some of these motivational, especially craft industry people who are like, "Oh, we'll help you build your business. We'll help you make big money!" They don't know the industry. They're just kind of motivational speaker types, whatever. But she, Tian, she knows what she's talking about better than all of us. Yeah, really. So I just have to shout out that when I first started working at Knit Picks, a crochet collection came out right after I started, and I am not much of a crocheter at all. I can crochet. I have crocheted a few things, but there was this one pattern called the Chevron Pop Shawl that it made me want to dive into crochet. It's knit in Hawthorne, and it has a pop of hot pink. Tian designed it, and it's awesome, and I love it so much.

Stacey (07:41):

I was so excited when we did that one because I loved picking out those really super bright colors for that. I just have a vivid memory with my coworkers at the time talking about getting that knit up in super bright colors because...

Lee (07:55):

Crocheted up.

Stacey (07:56):

Crochet, excuse me. Oh, man. So sorry.

Lee (07:59):

Because everyone talks about how knitting and crochet are good for their own separate things. Knitting's good for certain kinds of fabrics, and crochet is good for other certain kinds of fabrics. They look different, and that particular... It's really simple. It's basically like a rectangle, but the way the colors look

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with the chevrons with the crochet stitch, I don't know, just something about the way it looks, it's specifically crochet, and I love how it looks. Yeah.

Stacey (08:25):

Oh, yeah. Definitely. But Tian's also a knitter, and she has fabulous knitting. I'm sure it'll be linked in the show notes below, but one of my favorites is an older one from a collection years ago called the Freeport Cardigan, and it's a single pattern download, and it's lovely. It's in Wool Andes Tweed. It just fits really well, and it's been on my list to knit, and I should have actually knit that one now that I'm looking at it again. I'm like, "Oh, yeah. I've always wanted to knit that one because it has a really great shaw color on it."

Lee (08:58):

Yeah. I'm looking at it now. That's a great color. It almost looks like a hood, and then it's not quite a hood, but it's a big cozy neck warming kind of cowl collar.

Stacey (09:09):

So we'll give it over to Sara and interviewing Tian.

Sara (09:17):

Okay, so today we have a very special guest with us. We are so excited to welcome Tian Connaughton. Tian is a knit and crochet designer. She does both. She's pretty skillful. She's also an author, technical editor and a course creator, and if you all don't know this, you'll see her on the mast head of every single issue of WeCrochet Magazine because she has tech edited every single pattern that WeCrochet has ever released, which is pretty impressive. That is a huge amount of patterns. Today, we have Tian on the podcast because we're talking about a super exciting new video course that she's developed. It's going to be releasing throughout this spring. So welcome.

Tian (10:00):

Thank you. Thank you so much for having me. So glad to be here.

Sara (10:04):

Yeah, I'm so excited to talk about this course. It's such an impactful course. There's so much cool stuff to learn, but before we get into that, for people who haven't heard you on some of our past podcasts or past Facebook Lives, can you talk a little bit about yourself, how you learned to knit and crochet and how you started building your business around those crafts?

Tian (10:23):

Sure. So if you haven't seen me before or heard of me before, my name is Tian Connaughton of TianConnaughton.com. Like Sara mentioned, I tech edit for both knit and crochet. I design for both. I do a lot of course creation. I do a lot of different programs to empower women, particularly black and brown women to get into this fiber space and just make their dreams of whatever they want in the space a reality. I learned to knit... Actually, I started crocheting first back in 2001, but I was way back in my baby

corporate days. I learned from a coworker, and for a long time, people were saying, "Go learn to knit." And I was like, "No. I'm good with one hook. I don't need that two needle struggle."

Tian (11:14):

So for a very long time, I put off knitting until it was when my son was a toddler and I decided to leave corporate for a little while, and I was home for about a year and a half with a toddler. And if you have kids, it's boring. They sleep a lot. So I was watching Home and Garden channel a lot during those days. And Knitty Gritty was on during that time. And that's where I learned to knit because I was seeing the different textures and the different fabric that knit was making compared to crochet. Not that crochet wasn't beautiful. It was just different. And I was just fascinated by that. And after watching that show for a year, they had on a guest. Her name was Shirley Paden, and I saw her, this black woman, as a designer. And I was like, "Wait, I can do that?"

Tian (12:07):

So it was seeing her and seeing that someone that looked like me. That could be my sister or an aunt doing something that made me want to do this even more. And when I talk about representation matters, this is evidence because if it wasn't for her, I don't know where I would have been right now. So seeing her doing all that just made this whole reality that I'm living right now possible. So if I can do that for anyone, I'm here for it.

Sara (12:36):

Absolutely. And this course that you've developed for this spring really touches on representation. Before we dig too deep into that, something that really strikes me about your business is you are that person who supports other women, especially women of color. So can you talk a little bit about some of the courses you've created in the past as kind of your lead up to this course that you've created most recently? What are some of the other things that you've helped people learn in building their own businesses?

Tian (13:08):

Yeah. So going back to learning from Shirley and seeing what is possible, I wanted to bring that out into the world, as well, because I knew that I couldn't figure out things on my own, but I know for a lot of other designers and crocheters and knitters, figuring it out isn't that easy because there's not enough resources. And it was that experience that I had way back then that I wanted to share what I've done to kind of bring other women along with me. Of course I want men to learn from my programs, but we see that there is a major wage gap. We see that is a discrepancy between what women do and what men do. And I want to make sure that the women I'm supporting can support themselves. Right, so did I answer your question?

Sara (13:59):

Yes. Yeah, it was just talking about how the courses that you've developed in the past have really helped women in particular because the space in which we occupy is traditionally kind of a woman's space, historically, in terms of craft. And there has just been this growth of women creating sustainable businesses in that space. And you really have been leading the way on getting women to a place where they can really make money and sustain themselves and their families on this craft. So yeah, the extent

of the craft course knowledge that you've developed is immense. So if y'all are listening and ready to listen to Tian's course now, go check out some of the other courses she has, too, because they're all super helpful. But let's talk more about this course that you've developed over the last six, seven, eight months. It's been a long time.

Tian (14:55):

Yeah. Summer. Yeah, last summer.

Sara (14:58):

Yeah.

Tian (15:00):

Let's see. So with everything that was happening during 2020, pandemic, COVID, everyone was home, and then everything that happened with George Floyd and all the controversy that happened around racism and diversity, not just in the world globally, but within our fiber space. And you hit the nail on the head by saying this is a craft, and for a lot of people, they don't take this seriously as a business because it's such a crafty thing, and it's led by women, and women work aren't really serious work. That's in air quotes. That's not what I believe, but that's what the outside world believes. So when we're talking about making work accessible, when we're talking about women losing their jobs at such a higher rate than men did in 2020, women leaving their corporate jobs because they have to be home with their kids, when we're talking about things like that, then it's like how are we supposed to match those income inequality? How are we supposed to make that leap?

Tian (16:06):

So back in 2020, we're having this whole discussion around gender and race in the industry. I was looking at it from a different perspective. We're seeing more and more models of color on pages. And I'm thinking, "Well, what about the people behind the scene who are creating these patterns, who are making decisions?" And that's where my focus is because if we're just seeing people of color on pages, that seems like enough, but it's really not because we're not making an impact, a long lasting impact that will affect how the industry is shaped. So I wanted to look more closely at what are the things that are holding a lot of us back from making that decision to get into publishing? And for me, what I found through a conversation is it wasn't very accessible. A lot of people didn't understand what the process was, and if you don't know the process, then you don't think it's for you.

Tian (17:05):

So I wanted to break it down to make it super simple that publishing is not hard. Getting your work into a magazine is not hard. It takes work, of course, but overall, it's not difficult. And that's the focus of this program, Get Published, because we want to see more people who we don't traditionally see in this space get into these spaces.

Sara (17:32):

Absolutely. Something that you mentioned earlier in this interview, but you also brought up a lot in a written interview that you did for WeCrochet Magazine, Issue 5, was really talking about the issue of

representation in craft, especially when it comes to the BIPOC community, so Black, Indigenous, People of Color. And then also, just that the barriers of entry that exist there around the confusing nature of what publishing is because as you said, it's not always a straight forward process. It can be quite confusing sometimes. So to make it more accessible to more people, what are some of the things that you break down in this course, some of the lessons that you cover?

Tian (18:19):

So some of the things that we cover, and we get into the whole publishing thing really comprehensively, but we start from what to do before you even think about getting published because I'm not going to lie, women, we like to make sure that we have all our I's dotted and all our T's crossed before we even take that step. Guilty. I've been there, even though we don't need to, right? So we start with building your confidence by creating a portfolio. It's not needed, but if it's going to help you to feel like you're ready, then start there. And that's where we start with creating that portfolio of designs that kind of prove to yourself that you can actually do it because for a lot of us, if we don't feel like we're ready to make that step, we won't do it, even though we have all the credential and all the experience.

Tian (19:14):

So we created this as the first video because we want women to know that build up your confidence this way, and then take the leap. And then it doesn't feel like a leap. It's just like the next natural progression. Then we get into topics of call for submissions. What are they? Where do you find them? How do you submit your proposal to them? Because when I started out, I had no idea what any of that stuff meant. I didn't know what a proposal was. I didn't know what to include. Mine were janky, really janky back then, but over the years, I've learned to really develop a style and create systems that make it so much easier. If there's a submission, I can go through my old drawings and see what might fit, or come up with a new idea and have that template created so all I have to do is just put in the photo of the swatch and the photo of the sketch and do a quick write-up. And it's not like I've been asked to do over and over start it from scratch because I have systems. And I'm showing you how to do that also in the training.

Tian (20:23):

Some of the other things that we're covering is contracts. They seem scary. If you've never seen one, you're reading it, you're like, "Wow." So we try to break that down. We're not lawyers. I'm not a lawyer, but I'm going to break it down to you in simple form that you can get the general idea, and if you need to go speak to a professional, then go for it. Then we'll talk about what happens if you're accepted. Yay. We celebrate that. And then we talk about if you're rejected and that route you can take because again, it's not a failure if you're rejected. It's just another opportunity for you to do something else with that design.

Tian (21:03):

Then we talk about how to communicate with a publication because we are so scared to ask questions. You might have to work with a tech editor. What is a tech editor? So we talk about those things and working with sample knitters and crocheter if that publication works that way. So there's a lot of different ways that different publication works, and having been in the industry for 15 years, I've worked with a lot of different publications. So I know how to kind of maneuver through different types of opportunities, working with different publications. But the best thing about the series is, it's not just me

standing in front of a camera and talking because we don't need that. I don't want to be a talking head because this is not my story. This is for you to put your own spin on it and to see yourself.

Tian (21:59):

So we have interviews with designers, and we have interviews with publishers to get you the insight of the whole process. So we'll talk to designers who have never published before, and they're just kind of navigating how to get started and asking some of the questions you might be asking. We have interviews with more experienced designers who have gone through the process once, twice, a bunch of times, and they can share with you what they've learned over the years, and some of the questions that they had when they were starting out and some of the questions they have now. So depending on where you are, if you're just starting out, or if you've been doing it for a while, there's something there for everyone.

Sara (22:42):

Absolutely. It's such a good point that every publication kind of does it a bit differently, and you really are kind of the ultimate resource because you've worked with so many different companies and so many different publications in the past. And the thing that is most striking to me about this course is the point that you just made, is that you really do have the knowledge base to teach every part of this course if you wanted to, but incorporating members of the community really lives up to that kind of goal of representation that you set forth at the beginning. So I think we mentioned this in our Facebook Live, but you sign off every email with, "A rising tide lifts all boats," which has always really inspired me. And in this course, you've really lived that and really lifting up members of our community, really focusing on that representation. So who are some of the people who contribute to the course that you got to interview through this process?

Tian (23:41):

Yeah. And I'm so glad you brought up that signature because a lot of it sounds very Pollyanna-ish, like, "Oh, yeah sure." But when I do look at that email and I send it out to someone, I am actually saying that to myself. I'm actually speaking it out loud because I want the person on the other end to know that I'm not just here just to grab and take and run away. I'm here to support you along your journey. Am I making as much money as a lot of other people? Absolutely not, but like I say, it's not about that. It's community over competition. So I wanted to bring along a lot of the women that I work with. Some of them are in my membership program, Pattern and Partnership, and I wanted to bring them along because I want to show them what is possible. Some of them are starting out, and some of them have been at it for a while.

Tian (24:32):

So you might here from women such as Tanya, Joy, Amy. We have Kat. We have publications. We have Cynthia from Stitch and Store. We have Megan Fernandez at PomPom. So we have a wide range of women, and I know that you might be thinking, "Oh, where are the men?" But this is not about men right now. Right? We want to empower women. We want to lift women up. We want to see women of different shades and sizes and experience stages in the industry to show what is possible. So if you're just starting out, you're going to want to see the first video where we talk to Amy, Joy and Tanya. Those are three interviews that we really get into what they're feeling, how uncertain they are. So if you're starting out, too, you can really resonate with what they're saying.

Tian (25:26):

Then we talk to Kat and Paula and Joan later on who are more experienced. They've had a few acceptance under their belts and a few rejections as well. So you get to see both sides of that equation of, "I've got an accepted. What next? I've gotten a rejection. What next?" So you can see that there's different path, and just because you got a rejection, that's not the end. And an acceptance doesn't mean that you're at some greater level. It just means the publication loved your work. It fits their publication. They want what you have to offer. If you're rejected, it doesn't mean that they hate you or that it's personal. It's just that that design didn't fit that issue.

Tian (26:11):

So we get into all of that, and one of the things I really focus on with this course and all my other courses, it's not just about giving you information. It's about the mindset shift that really needs to come along with it because if you don't believe that you can do it, then nothing I teach you will ever work unless you believe that it's possible for you. And showing these women doing these different things, that's my hope that you'll see that their experience is your experience. And it's possible for you.

Sara (26:45):

Awesome. Did you encounter any particular challenges in creating this course?

Tian (26:53):

So when I started the course idea, I wanted it to be a certain way and not having all the skills necessary for it. It was like, "Oh, well, I want it this way." I mean, the end product doesn't look exactly how I want it, but Ira Glass says, and he's from This American Life. He says, "All of us who do creative work, we get into it because we have good taste." I have great taste, but my experience and my ability hasn't caught up to that yet. And that's the downside of where we are right now. I think a year or two from now, I will be able to create something even better, but for right now, that was the challenge of I'm not perfect. It's not exactly the way I want it to be, but there's enough information there to get others to the place where they need to be.

Tian (27:46):

And the other thing is that I wanted it to be accessible. I wanted it to show more people. And I think that we've achieved that here. I would've loved to have done a hundred more interviews, but that's not possible. I'm not Oprah, yet. But one day, we can sit around and just talk to people about their experiences so more of us can see our experiences of where we are and know that we are not alone, and that thing that we want to do, that feeling that we're feeling like [inaudible 00:28:19], when you're all clammed up, that feeling is normal. And then knowing that you're not alone, that really helps to push you forward because if you feel like, "Hey, that guy over there did it, and she did it, he did it, that I can do it." If you have that idea of what's possible, then it's easier for you to take that step. In this industry, a lot of what we want to do, we don't see it. We don't see people that does it that look like us, so it's a little difficult, but that's where we're trying to work.

Tian (28:50):

We're trying to figure out how to make more experiences more accessible. So that was part of the hardest part is not being able to realize my vision completely, but I think we're close, as close as we're going to get.

Sara (29:06):

Yeah. I think that point that you made at the end is especially relevant and something I'm most excited for in watching your course in that being in the craft industry, we all kind of have this one place where we've lived, and so much work happens behind the scenes that you don't know about. And so getting those perspectives and those learned experiences from others is so significant and meaningful, especially if you are just starting out and feeling less confident, or completely underrepresented as a lot of the BIPOC community, women of color have been in the craft space for so long. So hearing those stories, those examples of success or maybe something that wasn't exactly how you wanted it to be, but you learned from it and grew and got onto a new, better, maybe even more exciting place, and hearing those stories from the people that you interview throughout the course.

Tian (30:04):

Yeah. And I think from working from behind the scenes and wondering where are all these amazing designers I was seeing on Instagram and on Facebook that weren't represented, right? It's having that disconnect with what I was seeing on social media with what I was seeing in print. It was just like, what happened? Where are those folks? Why aren't these publications going after these folks? But then it's not easy for a publication to go out and kind of cherry pick people. When you have a call for submission, you're inviting folks to come in, and I think that a lot of publication can do a better job of reaching out to these different groups of people and say, "Hey, we want to see you. We want to serve you. We want to include you." Maybe not just reach out one at a time, but to different groups. Reach out to maybe a knitting group or something like.

Tian (30:55):

And in the interview with Megan Fernandez of PomPom, she talks about that. She talks about going out to different groups, and I hope that other publications will hear her story, see what they're doing, and see how they can probably do something similar to reach out to different communities so that the publication doesn't look so same-same, for lack of better word. So you can see more interest and more excitement on the pages.

Sara (31:24):

Absolutely.

Tian (31:25):

For a lot of us, when we see Instagram and what's created, and then you see the magazine, and it's like, "Where's the disconnect?" Because the people I follow, they create amazing work, and a lot of them have been published, but a lot of them have not. So where's the disconnect? How can we get more people into those spaces?

Sara (31:46):

Yeah. I think you bring up a really excellent point there, Tian, because as I was following along with your path as you were creating this course, something that really stood out to me was a point where you asked if there was someone in a leadership position at a publishing company or at a yarn company who was a BIPOC maker, Black, Indigenous, Person of Color, who's in charge of making those choices, what submissions get accepted, rejected, working within a budget to make sure contributors get paid, and I don't want to put words into your mouth, but it was a struggle, I think, for you to find someone in a leadership role who had a more diverse background, who wasn't a white woman. And watching that process as you created this course was something that really stood out to me as we've had these continued conversations over the last year and really in the knitting space since early 2019. We've started talking about racism in craft for a while now, and how there really is systemic racism that pervades every part of our society, but it especially is seen in craft in the problems with representation that you mentioned.

Sara (33:07):

But now, continuing forward in those positions of leadership where it's really maintaining that white supremacist culture of white people in positions of decision making and power and not really good representation in that space. So that's definitely something that you've brought attention to through this course. You've increased the representation in designers, helping more people get published, but also really calling attention to where we need to move as individuals, as a brand, as an industry and as a community. So I don't know if I put too many words into your mouth there, but...

Tian (33:49):

No, no. Thanks for bringing that up because when I was actually looking for publishers to reach out to, I specifically wanted to work with Black, Indigenous, People of Color because I wanted to show that there is another side, that we are out here doing this work, as well. And unfortunately, when I put out the call on social media, the response was very, very low. And my question is, how can publications start to make that shift? Not just to say, "Oh, we have a Black person or a Hispanic person on our board in publishing or in this field just because of their skin or their race or anything like that," but to look at a wider pool of people and not just the same old, same old. So what is the process for publications when they're looking for people to fill these spaces? And again, we go back to women. We have to feel like we tick every box before we apply, and especially a woman of color. We need to tick twice as many boxes, when in reality, you just need to be able to do the job and just apply for it.

Tian (35:09):

And on the other side, for a publication to be able to be open to give those opportunities, give those women a chance to actually prove themselves and to make mistakes, and not just, "Oh, well. We had that one Black woman on a cover. We can never have another Black woman on a cover because it didn't sell." Or, "We had that one Black publisher, and her issue didn't sell well. So that's it." Because you wouldn't do that for a white man or a white woman, right? You wouldn't just judge the whole applicant pool based on what they look like. So I guess my question is, what is the step forward? How do we get from where we are right now to where we can see more representation behind the scenes? Yeah.

Sara (36:00):

Yeah. It's definitely something that the craft industry needs to think long and hard about and definitely move in that direction. I think the course that you've developed getting more people into that professional craft space is taking leaps and bounds in that direction and definitely helping to move us hopefully forward. But yes, to your point, it's the first step on a long journey.

Tian (36:29):

Yeah. Absolutely, it's a very long journey because I don't think that this course alone is going to push us far enough, but I hope that others will come along and say, "Hey, I've learned enough. I am good enough. I'm ready to take that next step into one of those leadership position."

Sara (36:49):

Absolutely.

Tian (36:49):

I can't wait to see what happens.

Sara (36:52):

Me, too. So that's the next question on our list, which we've kind of talked about. So I don't know if we want to keep expanding on this, but what's your hope for this course? Diversity, representation, getting more people comfortable in just taking the leap and getting published, even though you might be stepping into something that's unknown, but anything else you want to talk about in terms of your hopes for the future there?

Tian (37:18):

Yeah. Basically, I just want folks to know that they are good enough right now. You don't have to be tapped on the shoulder just to be invited to publish, to get into a publication. Just know that whatever you're capable of right now, it might not be your best right now, like the quote before from Ira Glass. You have great taste, you might not be able to execute on that right now, but just take that step. See what happens. And if you are rejected, it's not personal. Just keep going. If you have a proposal and you love the idea and the publication didn't like it, send it off to somewhere else, or go self-publish it. Collaborate with a young company.

Tian (38:03):

So I hope that with this course, folks are seeing that there's not just one way to go. There are options that you might not have ever thought about. So look around. See what other people are doing at other industries and see how you might be able to kind of rejig what you're doing to fit the lifestyle you want because in the courses that I teach, especially in Pattern and Partnership, I go in there, and I tell folks, I don't have all the answers. I know how to get the answers. I know how to critically think through and get to where I want to go, but the key is to figure out what is that vision that you want for yourself? What is that next level you want? Do you want to be sipping Mai Thai on the beach? Or in my case, I want to be on a lake. So how does the life I'm creating right now going to set me up for that?

Tian (38:57):

So think about the vision you want. Think about do you want to leave corporate and not be able to come to a boss because your kid is sick, and you get that side eye where she's like, "Really, you can't just come in half day?" Because I've been there. And I don't want that for any woman who is a mother, or even if you're not a mother, to have that attitude from your boss of, "Why aren't you coming in?" Or if you call off just because you don't want to come in, you just want a personal day. I want you to have that space where you can just pursue the life that you want. Like this morning, I got up. I got up around nine. I read for a little bit. In my corporate days, I was out of the house by seven.

Sara (39:45):

Oof.

Tian (39:46):

On the road, and I was commuting an hour and a half away. And it was me driving. It wasn't like I was on a train where I can do something else. No, I had to physically drive myself. So I remember those days, and that's not the life I want. I want to see my kid grow up. I want to see my kid go to driving school. Oh, God. But I want to be able to do these things, and that's why I work with women because I want women to be able to achieve their wildest dream. So if this course is that stepping stone that you need, know that whatever you're learning here, there is so much more out there. This is just the tip of the iceberg.

Sara (40:28):

Mm-hmm (affirmative). Absolutely, and that mentality that you shared I think is super in line with our hopes and dreams for WeCrochet, too, is just kind of always that take advantage of that opportunity to try something new that's going to get you to a better place and to not be afraid of failure. And a rejection from a publication is not a failure, as you point out in the course. I think there is other opportunities for you to keep moving forward, keep progressing, keep challenging yourself, keep learning. And I honestly just cannot wait to watch your whole course, Tian. I think it's going to be incredible. Everyone, follow along. Where can people find the course?

Tian (41:10):

On my website. It is at...

Sara (41:13):

And we'll be sure to link to it in the show notes, as well.

Tian (41:16):

It's [tianconnaughton.thinkific.com/course/getpublished](https://tianconnaughton.thinkific.com/course/getpublished).

Sara (41:21):

We will link to it in the show notes, really easy. Yeah.

Tian (41:28):

It's a long one. I'll do a shorter one, (whispers) but that's what it is. Sorry.

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Sara (41:34):

We'll also get some info up on [crochet.com](http://crochet.com) and get a link over to the Thinkific page from there, as well, to make it super easy to find. So whether or not you're on Tian's website or ours, you'll be able to find the course hopefully fairly easily, and you can get published, which will be fantastic.

Tian (41:51):

We'd love to see all the new designers who were submitting proposals to WeCrochet and to Knit Picks because I want to see the next issue flooded with folks who were like, "Yes, I took this course, and I am ready to get published." So go ahead and flood them with your submissions.

Sara (42:09):

Yes. Do. That's our dream, too, with this course, is to have everyone really learn from your expertise, your knowledge, all the community members that you've interviewed and to definitely just take the leap. We are super into working with people who are new to getting published. We want your submissions. So yeah, submit to WeCrochet. Submit to Knit Picks. We're going to be psyched to keep an eye out for those. Tian, what are some of the other places people can find you online or interact with you online?

Tian (42:41):

Sure, you can find me on Instagram. I am [KnitDesignsByTian](https://www.instagram.com/KnitDesignsByTian) over there. Or if you are a designer, and you're interested in getting more one-on-one support, more accountability, I also have a membership program called Pattern and Partnership. That group is amazing. We do live Q&As each month. We do accountability inside the Facebook group because for me and what I've learned is that a lot of designers don't need more training. You need to just put your butt in the seat and do the work. And that's what we're about over there, to crack the whip and get you to work so that you can make more sales, and that's what the point of that group is all about.

Sara (43:31):

Awesome. Fantastic. Anything else to talk about or anything else you want to share before we say goodbye for today?

Tian (43:40):

Wow, we covered a lot today. Please follow me on social media [@KnitDesignsByTian](https://www.instagram.com/KnitDesignsByTian). I love to chat over there. I share a lot of resources. I do a lot of pep talk and not so nice pep talks, too. So if you need a quick kick in the butt just to be able to do that thing you've been talking about that you've been dragging your feet about, come on over there and just tell me what it is, and I will definitely tell you what's what.

Sara (44:09):

Fantastic. Well, thank you so much for joining us today, Tian, and we are so excited for the Get Published video course. We'll be sure to get all the links up in the show notes so everyone can follow along. Those videos will be releasing every two weeks throughout the spring into the early summer. So keep following along, keep learning, and keep an eye out for any WeCrochet and Knit Picks submission calls because once you gather all of Tian's knowledge, you will be ready to submit and get published, and we can't wait

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to work with you. So thank you so much for your time, Tian. It was so great to get the chance to talk with you.

Tian (44:48):

Thank you, Sara. Really appreciate it.

Sara (44:50):

Thank you.

Stacey (44:53):

This podcast was originally created by Kelly Petkin.

Lee (44:56):

It's hosted by me, Lee Meredith and Stacey Winklepleck

Stacey (45:01):

And it's produced by Heather Mann.

Lee (45:03):

Today's episode included an interview with Sara Dudek and Tian Connaughton.

Stacey (45:09):

The Knit Picks Podcast is produced and edited by Sarah Nairalez

Lee (45:14):

Hillary Elliot and Morgan Bratton make our artwork.

Stacey (45:18):

Special thanks to Sara Dudek and Ursula Morgan.

Lee (45:22):

We recorded this episode in the Pacific Northwest, where we're glad to wear face masks outside because they also help protect us from seasonal allergies on our nightly walks.

Stacey (45:32):

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

Lee (45:40):

From everyone here at Knit Picks, thank you for joining us.

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Stacey (45:44):

Everything mentioned in this episode, along with all the yarn, tools and inspiration that knitters could need can be found in our website at [KnitPicks.com](http://KnitPicks.com).

Lee (45:53):

If you'd like to be one our podcast, leave us a voicemail. We'll be checking it regularly and using your calls in later episodes. To leave a voicemail, call 360-334-4847 and record your message. You can also record a voice memo on your phone and email us that audio file at [Podcast@KnitPicks.com](mailto:Podcast@KnitPicks.com).

Stacey (46:16):

Like and follow us on your favorite social media platforms, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest and YouTube at Knit Picks.

Lee (46:23):

Rate and review us wherever you listen to this podcast.

Stacey (46:27):

Until next time, happy crafting.

[music ends]

Lee (46:31):

And it's called... I don't remember either. Oh, no.

Stacey (46:36):

Okay. Okay, hang on a second. I'm going to look it up.