

### Where are you based?

In Wimbledon, London. Yes, near the tennis!

### Tell us about your career, background and education.

I grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa. Long hot summers were peppered with thunderstorms, winters were windswept and icy on the dry highveld. There were landscapes of wide open blue skies and iron-stained red soil, grass seeds undulating, nothing to hear but crickets and birdsong. So beautiful. My grandmother taught me to knit when I was about seven or eight. She was an extremely gifted knitter and crocheter. I still have some of her lace work. She used to make clothes for us, although I didn't appreciate that at the time. I was mortified being made to wear a crocheted dress to my friends' parties. She died when I was still young, but I think we would really enjoy comparing notes now.

I went to the University of the Witwatersrand, where I got a music degree majoring in violin and viola. I worked freelance for orchestras, ran a string quartet and taught violin. They were happy years, and I made some wonderful friends, but I got tired of the very long hours, always working while family were relaxing. I followed my parents' footsteps into computer programming and started working as a software developer. I wanted to see the world and moved to London to write trading software for one of the banks in the City. While the fast pace was a challenge, the long hours weren't compatible with a young family, so when I had my children I decided it was time for my third career and taught myself how to dye yarn.

### Tell us about your business.

I hand-dye sustainable cashmere yarns and design my own knitting patterns to show off the unique range of colours I really love. I sell the yarns together with the patterns as a kit, or you can buy the yarns and patterns on their own. My daily dog walks on Wimbledon Common are a constant inspiration for the colour palette of my four-ply yarns. I also love working with plants: that becomes a conversation between the cashmere and the dyes, it's serendipitous and rewarding.

### How did you come to set it up?

I became frustrated with the difficulties of choosing yarn for colourwork. I would find the right colour, but the wrong weight or fibre. I struggled to come up with good combinations that were subtle but with a bit of pop, so I thought maybe I could learn to dye. I am fascinated with colour theory and how to dye complex colours from primary dyes. I invested a lot of time working out dye recipes. I get eczema on my hands so I struggle to work with scratchy fibres: it had to be cashmere if I was going to work with it all day. It took me years to find a truly sustainable cashmere supplier, but once I did, Chroma Nima was born!

### What does the name Chroma Nima mean, and where does it come from?

It comes from Greek: chroma is the purity of a colour or its freedom from white or grey, and nima means thread or yarn.

