

# Q&A

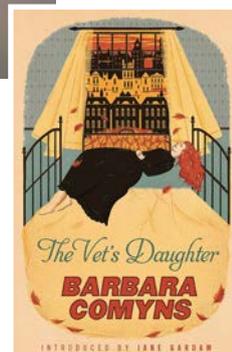
WITH WSJ.

Designers and dealers who work with handmade textiles have a rich sense of the possibilities of craft. Here, three specialists in the field discuss techniques, tools of the trade, travel and other pleasures of their fabric-focused lives. —*Christopher Ross*



## GREGORY PARKINSON

For two decades, Gregory Parkinson, 54, ran a namesake fashion brand, gaining recognition as a CFDA/*Vogue* Fashion Fund finalist and dressing the likes of Michelle Obama. About four years ago, on his first sourcing trip to India, he realized that the craftsmanship and materials available there would allow him to create a new home-goods line he'd been considering, based on designs he'd created for his own space. "It was a slow but logical transition," says the England-born, L.A.-based designer of the shift from fashion to the domestic realm. Gregory Parkinson Surround launches this spring with a collection of handmade throws, cushions and table linens; it also offers custom fabrics for clients like design firm Commune. On regular visits to Kolkata, Parkinson works side by side with block printers, finding new applications for historic techniques. "The core inspiration for every one of my fashion collections was textiles. I see this as a continuation of the work I've always done," he says. [gregoryparkinson.com](http://gregoryparkinson.com). >



### 1. What's your favorite city?

London, Paris and New York are all great walking cities. Kolkata [shown] is definitely a favorite too.

### 2. What's your signature accessory?

My LFrank bangle.

### 3. What tool is essential for your job?

Japanese fabric shears.

### 4. What museums do you like to visit?

Kettle's Yard in Cambridge [U.K.; shown, top], which was once the home of a former Tate curator, has such a personal, eclectic selection. The Fondation Cartier in Paris [shown, bottom] is the most beautiful building, with charming gardens.

### 5. What's on your reading list?

Most books from Virago, a '70s feminist press. Molly Keane and Barbara Comyns are a couple of favorite authors.

### 6. What's your favorite shop?

Xenomania in New York [which carries Parkinson's line] has the most incredible textile treasures.

### 7. What's a recent discovery?

A printing technique that utilizes both sides of the fabric. It's become my signature.

### 8. What are your travel essentials?

At least 10 white T-shirts, Birkenstocks and oversize canvas bags for purchases.





## BARBARA PISCH

At age 7, Barbara Pisch became a political refugee, fleeing communist Slovakia with her family and resettling around Asbury Park, New Jersey, in the mid-1980s. Teenage trips back to her homeland inspired a new hobby: collecting antiques. "It was a way of reclaiming my culture," says Pisch, now 39. In particular, she began hoarding antique, hand-woven hemp and linen textiles, produced up until the 1950s, used by locals for everything from grain sacks to sheets. As the materials became scarcer and more expensive, Pisch started repurposing from her collection, first creating a tote bag in her 20s. After stints in the fashion industry and at design galleries, and with a graduate degree in the history of decorative arts under her belt, Pisch landed back in Asbury Park, where she made wholesaling and custom work with the antique linens a full-time job. In 2016 she opened a storefront, Patriae, offering runners, bags and apparel fashioned from her home-spun heritage. "They're kind of primal, raw," says Pisch. "It's about letting the textiles speak through the design." *patriae.com*.

### 1. What historic textiles do you love?

Antique Slovak block-printed indigo textiles. There was a rich tradition of indigo dyeing in Slovakia from the early 18th to the mid-20th centuries.

### 2. What music do you listen to while you work?

I'm a lifelong Deadhead, so I usually have the Grateful Dead [shown, near left] or Jerry Garcia Band playing, along with Jonathan Richman, Willie Nelson [shown, middle left] and old bluegrass.

### 3. Who's your favorite author?

I love John Fante's style and candor, and I can relate to his stories of growing up in an immigrant family.

### 4. What are your grooming essentials?

I'm constantly using coconut oil and Acure's Quick Fix Correcting Balm on my dry skin.

### 5. What are your three travel essentials?

A large Patriae tote bag, a knitting project and a big cashmere scarf. I always look forward to knitting for an entire flight.

### 6. What's your favorite restaurant?

Talula's in Asbury Park [shown] and Littleneck in Brooklyn.

### 7. What's your favorite indulgence?

Escaping from East Coast winters to tropical beaches as often as possible. (Round House in Bathsheba, Barbados, is my top place to stay anywhere in the world.) And antique jewelry!

### 8. What's a recent investment piece?

Vintage Carl Auböck brass objects.

### 9. What are your favorite design objects?

Furniture by Axel Einar Hjorth [shown] and Richard Riemerschmid.

### 10. What's your favorite design movement?

The Wiener Werkstätte.

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR LEFT: CHRISTINA LILLY (2); SHELLY KATZ/THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION/GETTY IMAGES; RIC CARTER/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; COURTESY OF ECCO; COURTESY OF ACURE; SARA STADTMILLER; COURTESY OF 'STDBBS; IMAGNO/GETTY IMAGES; COURTESY OF 'STDBBS; CLEMENTE DO ROSARIO/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; COURTESY OF BARBARA PISCH

CLOCKWISE FROM FAR RIGHT: HANS GISSINGER; COURTESY OF JENNI LI; COURTESY OF MASON PEARSON; ROBERTHARDING/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; COURTESY OF TIMBER PRESS; PHOTO BY PIET OUDOLF; COURTESY OF SAIPUA; COURTESY OF TITILAKA; UKKI STUDIO/SHUTTERSTOCK; HANS GISSINGER; COURTESY OF JENNI LI; PICTURE PARTNERS/ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; LUTSINA TATIANA/SHUTTERSTOCK; COURTESY OF WENDY NICHOL

### 1. What's a recent piece you discovered?

A *pañon* from northern Peru, an ikat textile with an intricate macramé border, used as a shawl or to carry small children. I traveled six hours by car through the mountains of Peru to reach a small village where a cooperative of women makes them.

### 2. What museums do you like to visit?

The Guggenheim in New York.

### 3. What are your three travel essentials?

An Intiearth shawl, Perfumera Curandera healing perfume and a cotton bandanna.

### 4. What tools are essential to your job?

WhatsApp, a large desk or table and a computer.

### 5. What's your signature accessory?

Rose-gold stud earrings by Wendy Nichol.

### 6. What's your favorite hotel?

Titilaka on Laka Titicaca in Peru. It's a small lodge on a private peninsula, and it blends modern design with Andean culture.

### 7. What's your favorite recent discovery?

Native cotton, dating back 5,000 years in Peru, is colored naturally. Many farmers are now growing these organic crops again. And the new Saipua store [shown] in Red Hook, Brooklyn.

### 8. What's your favorite place to visit?

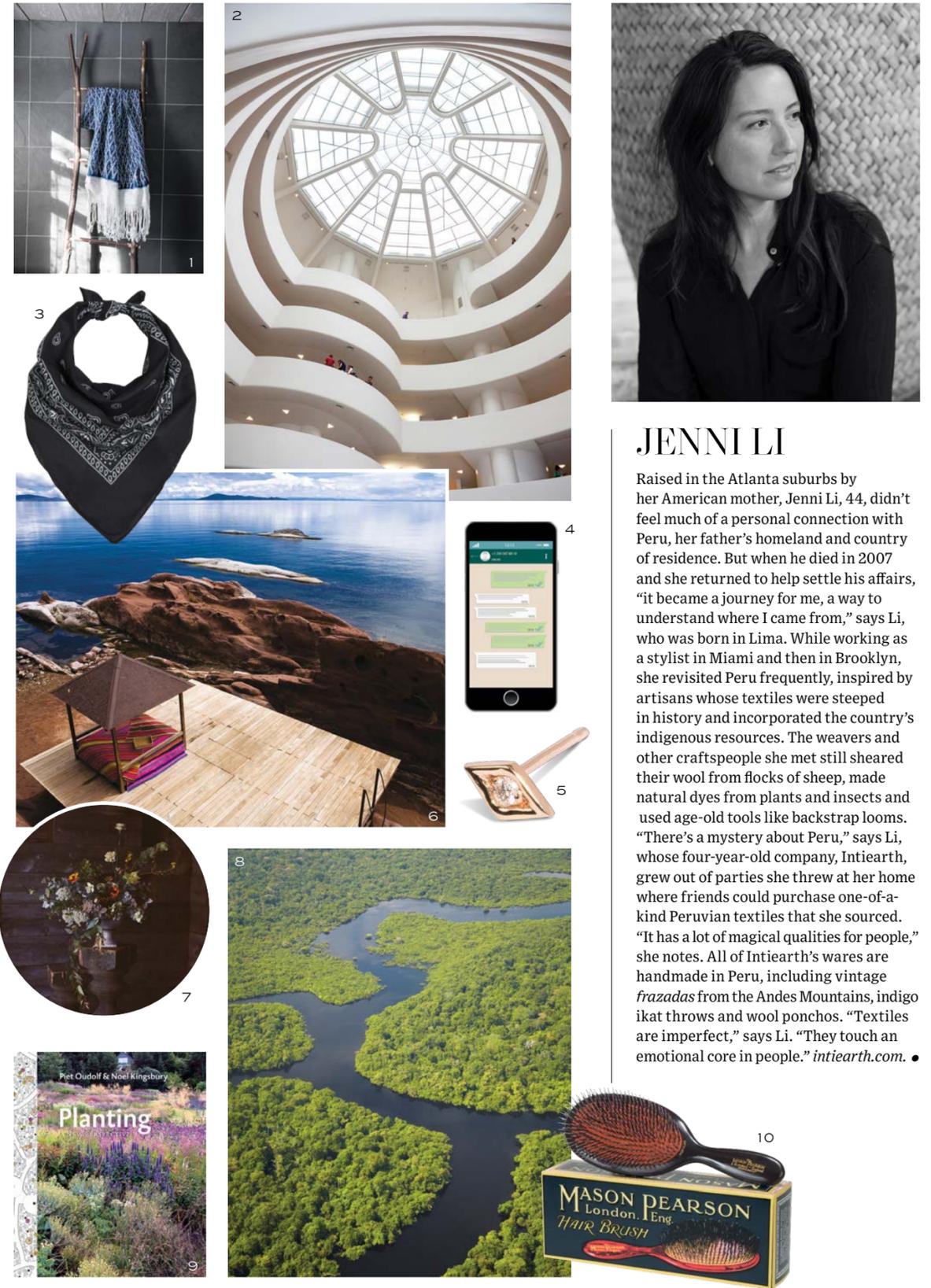
The Amazon jungle. It reminds me how important it is to have a symbiotic relationship with nature.

### 9. What's your favorite book?

*Planting: A New Perspective*, by Piet Oudolf and Noel Kingsbury.

### 10. What are your three grooming essentials?

A Mason Pearson hairbrush, Tata Harper face oil and rose-water spray.



## JENNI LI

Raised in the Atlanta suburbs by her American mother, Jenni Li, 44, didn't feel much of a personal connection with Peru, her father's homeland and country of residence. But when he died in 2007 and she returned to help settle his affairs, "it became a journey for me, a way to understand where I came from," says Li, who was born in Lima. While working as a stylist in Miami and then in Brooklyn, she revisited Peru frequently, inspired by artisans whose textiles were steeped in history and incorporated the country's indigenous resources. The weavers and other craftspeople she met still sheared their wool from flocks of sheep, made natural dyes from plants and insects and used age-old tools like backstrap looms. "There's a mystery about Peru," says Li, whose four-year-old company, Intiearth, grew out of parties she threw at her home where friends could purchase one-of-a-kind Peruvian textiles that she sourced. "It has a lot of magical qualities for people," she notes. All of Intiearth's wares are handmade in Peru, including vintage *frazadas* from the Andes Mountains, indigo ikat throws and wool ponchos. "Textiles are imperfect," says Li. "They touch an emotional core in people." *intiearth.com*.