

# LAS MANUELAS





LAS MANUELAS is a community, a methodology, a commitment, a project ..., initiated by the Peruvian NGO Movimiento Manuela Ramos in collaboration with IED REC, the non-profit Research Center of IED Madrid, supported by Fundación La Caixa and Economistas sin Fronteras.

# INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND

At more than 4000 meters altitude, in the distant plateaus in the south of Puno, Peru, we find the alpaca artisans. Strong, joyous women, capable of leaving their distinct imprint on each piece they knit. Each stitch creates unique and soulful garments that tell their story and accompany us forever.

Learn. Connect. Share.  
Inspired by the emotive encounter with these women, a group of design students identifies the need to generate a production process that eliminates the distance between designers and craftspeople and facilitates the direct connection between both.

This is how the Co-Design Methodology and Platform were born. As a result, we have a digital design tool that recovers traditional techniques and gives way to organic, artistic design pieces.

Beginning with the availability of the actors and prime materials, a design and production process is created, making the resources and needs of the women a priority, thus allowing us to trace the production process of a single garment from its origin to the final product.

By involving the artisans in the design of the pieces, the Co-Design Platform encourages creative collaboration, breaking down barriers through digital means and permeating each piece with its own singular identity.

Knit with Peruvian alpaca and dyed naturally by artisans with a beautiful range of colors, these pieces will be showcased throughout the world.



Cercado de Lima

Tarma

Jauja

Huancayo

Parque Nacional Otishi

Huancavelica

Ayacucho

Ag. Cali

Ollantayta

Abancay

Pisco

Paracas

Ica

Nasca

Cotahuasi

Chala

Camaná

Arequipa

Moquegua

Juliaca

Puno

Titicaca

Conduriri

Desaguadero

Tiwanaku

La Paz

Caranavi

Corico

Rurrenabaque

Pilon Lajas Indigebois Territory Park and...

Reserva Nacional del Amazonas Manuripi...



# ONE WOMAN ONE STORY



# FOSTERING BIODIVERSITY





SUSTAINABILITY

Three women are seated in a room with a light blue wall, engaged in hand-knitting. The woman on the left wears a red cap and a light green sweater over a blue patterned skirt. The woman in the center wears a white cap, a white vest over a blue and white striped shirt, and red pants. The woman on the right wears a wide-brimmed straw hat and a light green cardigan over a blue skirt. The text 'TRACEABLE CRAFT' is overlaid in large, outlined letters across the middle of the image.

# TRACEABLE CRAFT

All pieces are handknit in an entirely artisanal, traceable and sustainable process, wherein the women realize the whole process for each piece. Starting with the handspun alpaca wool of their own animals, which is dyed artisanally with local flora they create a beautiful craft product that tells the story of its origin.

# VALUES

## EMPOWERMENT

The final goal of the Las Manueles initiative is to empower women living in the remote Andean highlands of southern Peru; women alpaca herders who own between 30 to 300 animals, who have learned to transform their precious wool into beautiful products. Our initial research has been focused to identify methodologies and processes to elevate these women by valuing their work and providing tools to be economically independent.

## FOSTERING BIODIVERSITY

IED REC is developing a real time wool database of this herder community to give designers information of the availability of the wool. This method respects the alpaca wool cycle avoiding any type of alteration to the environment, its natural processes, and the production times of the women alpaca herders. Each series is created based on the availability of the different qualities and original colors of the wools to preserve biodiversity.

## ONE NATURAL MATERIAL

The women of the LAS MANUELAS Collective use only 100% natural handspun alpaca wool, from their own animals that is naturally dyed with local flora. Not only do we use Baby Alpaca, which is only available in the first skilling with very young animals. We optimize the use of the wool by mixing in the finest wool from older animals with the Baby Alpaca to preserve its preciousness, softness and beauty.

## TRACEABILITY

Each woman performs the whole production process for each of the pieces. From caring for the alpacas, shearing, spinning, and dyeing, to the final knitting of the product. This in itself is exceptional and extraordinary. Each woman impregnates each garment with a piece of her soul, telling a very unique story. This is a key value of the Las Manueles Project: One Design · One Story!

## CO-CREATION

The Co-Design methodology is created by means to eliminate the traditional hierarchy between designers and producers. It offers a scenario of equality, and generates a system of building true connections between them brought to life in the design of each piece.

## CONNECTION

The digital platform enables collaboration over large distances, avoiding investing time and cost for travelling. By developing the tool the REC Team worked on making it easily accessible for both artists and artisans.

## EQUALITY

The platform recreates the original artisanal process of design, by going point by point, exactly like the artisans who knit point by point. A new dimension of equality has been built that requires the same amount of time for design development as production.

## UNIQUENESS AND PERMANENCE

Each piece is unique and timeless, occupying a permanent space within Las Manueles. Independent from the seasonal fashion calendar, it is only produced on demand.

The extraordinary quality of the pieces are sure to accompany you for life, their versatility offers you the possibility to use it as fashion or home accessory or just as an art piece hanging on the wall of your home.

## ECONOMY

This initiative allows the alpaca herders to improve their lives by offering them an opportunity to use their wool, apply their skills, enter the professional market, and have direct access to economic benefits. All earnings go directly to the project by improving their workplace conditions, training in alpaca raising and maintenance, and hopefully offering education for their children in the future.

## OPENNESS

Las Manueles is an open collaborative initiative where all information is accessible.

The digital platform is open source and free of charge, available online on the website for everyone interested.

Las Manueles, a commitment, a cooperation initiative which developed its own methodology and digital platform to connect alpaca herders and artisans from southern Peru with artists and designers from all over the world to co-create unique series of hand knitted pieces.

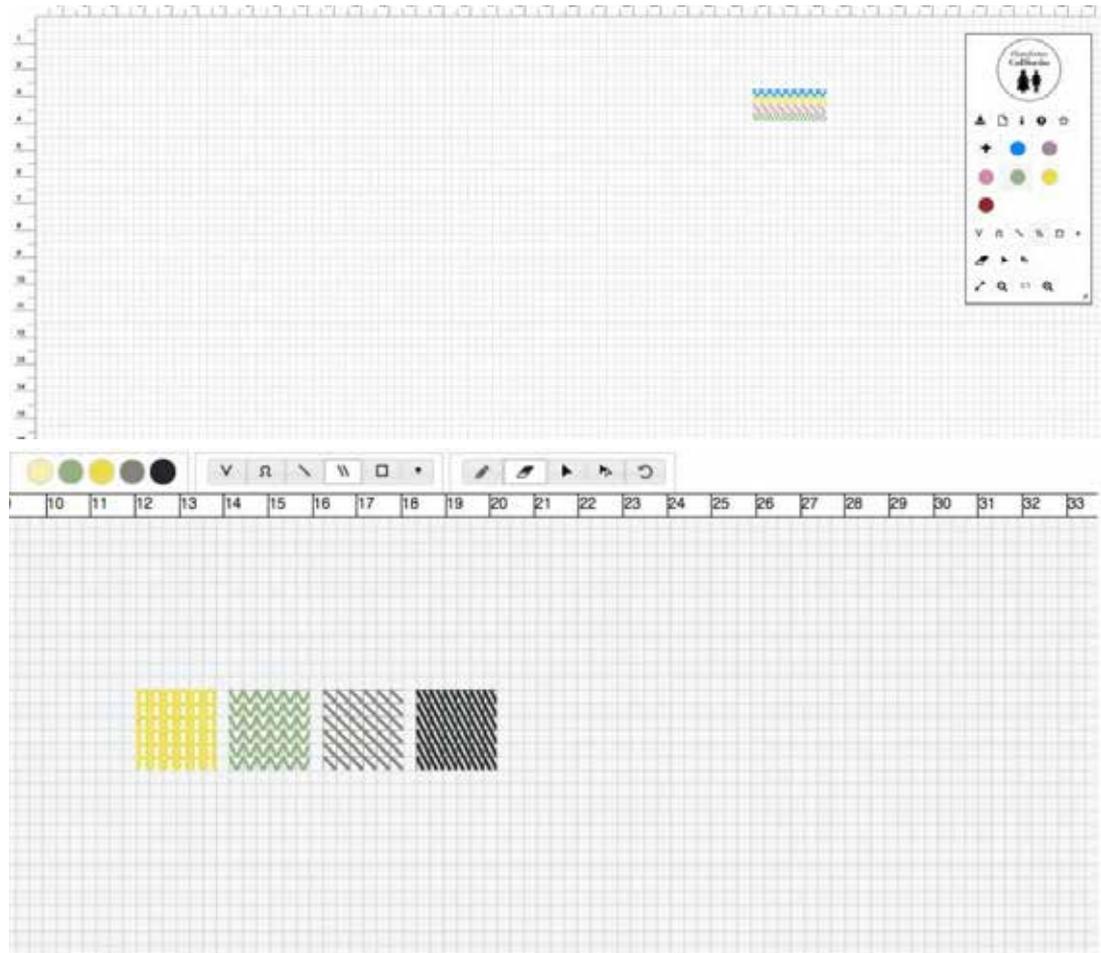
# CODESIGN

A photograph of two women in traditional Peruvian attire, including wide-brimmed straw hats and colorful shawls, engaged in hand-knitting. They are outdoors under a clear blue sky. The woman in the foreground is wearing a white sweater and a pink skirt, while the woman in the background is wearing a pink sweater and a green shawl. The word 'CODESIGN' is overlaid in large, white, outlined letters across the center of the image.

# CODESIGN PLATFORM

Design of the co-creation digital craft platform.  
Design tool development.

The platform does not require an internet connection and can be used on all computers that support HTML5 and SVG (IE11, Chrome from version 49 and later). This allows access to the platform and the capacity to design from remote areas with a minimum of equipment and technological knowledge.



The project redefines conventional design methodology starting from natural resources through a database (in the same platform) before designing begins. It also informs the user/designer of the availability of the materials that are available in each region/community/relevant geographical area.

This small change in the process causes a significant positive impact, creating a new design methodology. It emphasizes respect for the environment and its natural resources when it comes to the availability of materials, avoiding artificial production of required materials, and recognizing that Planet Earth and its ecosystems naturally create wonderful materials. Nature inspires the design of the future.



# ALPACA WOOL DATABASE

# CO-DESIGN METHODOLOGY

Once the designer / artist has finished their design we send the digital pattern by email to our production coordinator in Puno.

She will then travel to the communities in the southern area of Puno, where Las Manueles live and raise their precious alpaca animals.

With her help the artisans participate in the design digitally through the Co-Design Platform, using laptops.

Once they finish their patterns they are printed in a regular printing machine we delivered, in A4 format.

Once printed, they are pieced together with tape and used as the physical pattern for production.

Each design has a data sheet with all of the necessary information for the design such as title, tension, specific color code, feedback for artisans, etc.





# ART SERIES



AUSTRALIA  
Reka



DENMARK  
HuskMitNavn



POLAND  
Seikon



ISRAEL  
Broken Fingaz



BRAZIL  
Bicicleta Sem  
Freio



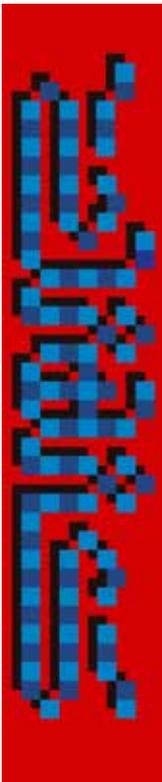
UNITED  
KINGDOM  
Lakwena



USA  
Revok



FRANCE  
L'Atlas



GERMANY  
Zebu



VENEZUELA  
SatOne



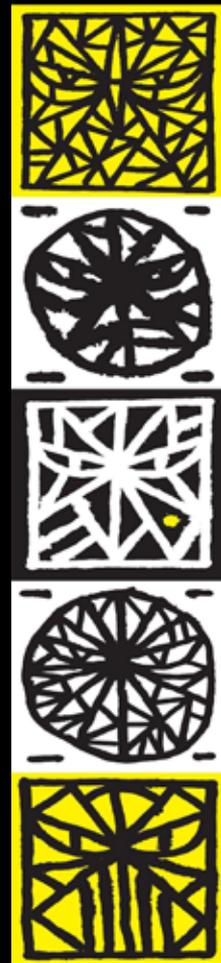
ITALY  
Solomostry





Printed and assembled pattern and final product from ART SERIES

# ONE DESIGN



SOLO MOSTRY / from Art  
to the design of scarf

# ONE STORY



CONNECTIVITY

UNIQUENESS & PERMANENCE

TRACEABLE CRAFT

FOSTERING BIODIVERSITY

NATURAL MATERIALS

ECONOMIC VITALITY

DIGITAL CODESIGN

ALPACA WOOL DATABASE

TRANSPARENCY



# LAS MANUELAS

un diseño | una historia

Contact:  
Isabel Berz  
i.berz@ied.es

[lasmanuelas.org](http://lasmanuelas.org)