

AWAMAKI LAB

CONNECTING CULTURES THROUGH INNOVATIVE DESIGN

OLLANTAYTAMBO • CUSCO • PERU

Awamaki Lab explores the intersection of sustainability, ethical sourcing and product innovation through a fashion mentorship program that fosters cross-cultural partnership between recent fashion graduates and Awamaki's indigenous weavers collective.

Recognizing the next generation of design talents, Awamaki Lab offers selected participants an unparalleled opportunity to develop a capsule collection in the serene environment of Ollantaytambo, Peru. Designers incorporate traditional Andean textiles into a series of unique, one-off garments, sourcing these textiles directly from Awamaki and its association of 36 Quechua women weavers. Over the course of four months, designers cultivate their unique vision and showcase their aesthetic versatility by combining vibrant, hand-spun weavings with their own contemporary patterns and silhouettes.

Bridging the material-culture gap, Awamaki introduces designers to the prominent iconography and art history of the Sacred Valley, with trips to museums, artisan markets, and indigenous weaving communities. Designers can use these visits as a point of reference for their work, or further their education by taking hands-on courses to learn local craft techniques, such as the art of natural dyeing. Designers have complete creative freedom to incorporate these elements into their collections, as they see fit. Designers receive mentorship from leaders in the socially responsible design sector to gain insight into fashion-market trends, volley design ideas, and finalize collection details. Designers also work with a fashion photographer – whom they pre-select from a dossier of portfolios- to develop a lookbook during the last month of Lab, which will be publicized through Awamaki's online networks.

Through an iterative process, designers hone their artistic skills and lend a modern perspective to Awamaki's range of products. This improves the organization's marketability and helps to stimulate economic growth in the isolated, rural communities where Awamaki works.

PROGRAM DATES:

- July-October 2010 (4 months)
- January-April 2011 (4 months)
- June-September 2011 (4 months)

MEET YOUR MENTOR:

- Awamaki Lab welcomes TARA ST. JAMES, owner and creative director of [STUDY](#) as its first Design Mentor. Tara imparts 7 years of experience as a pioneer in the socially responsible design sector to Awamaki's inaugural Lab designer, assisting with design concept and brand development via correspondence work. Tara will help designers realize their artistic vision through bi-monthly critiques that consider collection cohesion and point of view, sustainable practices and processes, and consumer market trends.
- Tara St James was born and raised in Montreal, Canada but has lived and worked in New York for the past 7 years and she now calls Brooklyn home. Formerly the creative director of Covet, a mainstream eco-friendly sportswear collection for men and women, Tara now owns and designs Study, a high-concept brand designed and produced primarily in New York City. She also works with local artisans in India to create very limited runs of special edition pieces and is looking to expand this very specialized type of production to other artisans around the world.

The Fall / Winter 10 collection for Study will be its second collection, it is inspired by restrictions and studies no-waste patternmaking. Tara is hoping to add more accessories, expand fabric development for the brand and hopefully even add a men's line in the near future.

She is also good at math and loves organizing socks.

MONTH 1 - JULY: CROSS-CULTURAL IMMERSION AND DESIGN BRAINSTORMING

- Tour of Awamaki weaving community in Patacancha, which includes natural dyeing and hand-weaving demonstrations, an introduction to the prominent iconography of Andean textiles, and a visit to a traditional Quechua home.
- Attend Awamaki's bi-annual natural dyeing workshop in Patacancha, where Awamaki helps the weaving association dye bulk quantities of alpaca and sheep's wool to be used in hand-woven textiles.
- Trip to the Center for Traditional Textiles of Cusco ([CTTC](#)), the San Pedro market, and fabric shops in the garment district of Cusco.
- Visit to the internationally-renowned folk-artisan market in Pisac and the Museo Comunitario de Pisac.
- Initial skype meeting with Tara to brainstorm and discuss early sketches and inspiration board.

MONTH 2 – AUGUST: TEXTILE SOURCING, PATTERN DEVELOPMENT

- Drafting patterns and cutting muslin.
- Shopping trip at the Awamaki store! Sourcing naturally-dyed, hand-woven Awamaki textiles to be used in the Lab Collection.
- Shopping trip to Cusco fabric stores to purchase locally-sourced textiles and trimming to be used in the Lab collection
- Skype meetings with Tara to review collection progress – sketches, color board, fabric choices, and use of Awamaki textiles as features in contemporary patterns.

MONTH 3 – SEPTEMBER: COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT

- Cutting and sewing of collection.
- Skype meetings with Tara..

MONTH 4 – OCTOBER: COLLECTION COMPLETION, PHOTOGRAPHER COLLABORATION, FASHION SHOW PRESENTATION

- Completion of collection!
- Skype meetings with Tara.
- Collaboration with photographer to develop a look book, which will be featured on the Awamaki website and distributed through Awamaki's public relations and social media networks.
- Launch of collection! Presentation of collection – through exhibition or fashion show - at [Andean Wings](#) venue in Cusco.
- Sale of garments through Awamaki's online shop – with the option to reproduce popular styles through a pending Ollantaytambo fair-trade sewing collective.

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Start-up Costs: Awamaki US Pays

- Facility Inputs: s/2,650
 - Studio rent: s/175 x12m = s/2100
 - Serger: s/550
 - Cutting/Sewing Table
 - Ironing board
- Sewing Supplies: s/131
 - Fabric scissors
 - Pattern paper
 - Wax chalk
 - Iron
 - Muslin: s/2-3 x 10meters
 - Scrap Paper
 - Pencils
 - 60" Measuring Tap
 - C-Curve Ruler/ French Curve
 - 36" or 45" yardstick
 - Tracing wheel
 - L Square (Tailor's Square)
 - 18" Graph Ruler C-thru
 - Pins
- **TOTAL: s/2,781 = \$ 975.00**

Program Fees: Designer Pays

- Fabrics: \$800
 - Awamaki textiles purchased *at cost* to be used in collection (12-15 pieces): \$400
 - Cusco Fabrics (price reflects yardage requirements and fiber/fabric diversity): \$300
 - Trimmings: \$100
- Living Arrangement (Room and Board x 4months): \$1,000
 - Homestay: \$250x4months OR
 - Room in Volunteer House plus food – providing space is available at start of program.
- Awamaki Overhead: \$200
 - Overhead covers any unforeseen costs, AND/OR can be reinvested into educational programs for Patacancha weavers.
- **TOTAL: \$2,000**

AWAMAKI LAB APPLICATION

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PORTFOLIO REQUIREMENTS:

- Please include 10 -15 JPEG images (not to exceed 2 MB each, or 30 MB total) of personal, professional, and/or student work that showcase your design aesthetic and creative process.

COVER LETTER:

- 250 words describing your relevant studio, work and design experience, why you would like to join the Lab project, and how you think your skills will be an asset to the Awamaki Weaving Project.

APPLICATION QUESTIONNAIRE:

- Please answer the questions below and submit with cover letter and portfolio to Annie@awamaki.org
 1. Fashion design is an applied art that creatively engages the diverse elements of our visual culture. Designers help to interpret such visual cues in coherent and wearable ways. What do you think of this statement? What do you see as the main role of a designer?
 2. What do you identify as the central influence(s)/theme(s) of your work? How do you think Andean textiles will fit into your design vision and process?
 3. The global fashion supply chain is a burgeoning and dynamic entity that provides employment to millions of people. Its influence is widespread, and many environmentalists and social scientists cite it as a potential vehicle for greater environmental stewardship and social mobilization. What do you see as the biggest obstacle/problem facing the fashion industry today? How do you think the fashion industry can be transformed to improve environmental, social and/or economic conditions?
 4. Some people prefer to work to very clear instructions, others to take a more active role in defining their own work. Which do you prefer?
 5. Why do you think Awamaki's work is important?