

Ready, Teddy, Sew!

Description

Two sisters take their inspiration from the forest and its wildlife to create an intriguing and loveable line of handmade teddy bears and toys.



Anna and Kate Filatova are two sisters from Russia who design a make a unique line of teddy bears and toys under the Annapavlovna line, which they set up in 2008. The handcrafted playmates are often inspired by wildlife, with elephants, deer and rabbits among the selection on offer at their Etsy store. The duo also do made-to-order toys, each of them with Annapavlovnaâ??s signature well-loved look. We asked Anna to tell us more.



Alice: Can you tell us where the name Annapavlovna comes from?

Anna: Everyone in Russia is required to have three names: a given name, a patronymic, and a family name. Pavlovna indicates that our father was named Pavel.



Alice: When did you first start sewing bears?

Anna: Kate and I have loved teddy bears since childhood. Growing up, our mother and grandmother would make clothes, dolls, and stuffed animals for the kids in our family. We inherited our love of needlework and artistic skills from them. Though Kate studied economics and I studied fashion design, we work together to design and construct our collection. We started making bears about eight years ago.



Alice: Was it difficult to set up this venture â?? did you see it as a risk, and has it been worth it?

Anna: We have come such a long way to get where we are today. We had to work hard to find our own style.

We make my toys in our home, with a small cupboard and table storing all our tools, material and books â?? that is our small world. We can keep working for hours without stopping.



Alice: You design different collections of bears, and they all have a very unique look. Can you describe the design and making process to us?

Anna: We plan out all of the collections in advance: from the types of bears and their colors and sizes to which materials we will use. We plan every toy collection methodically before we make it: the idea and inspiration; what they will look like; what colors, sizes, and characters they all will be; what materials and pattern design to use. Creating patterns for a new design takes time and testing, and it can be weeks or even months before we are ready to start making a new bear. All of our teddy bears and animals are one of a kind and made with love, care and patience.

Alice: How often do you create a new bear collection?

Anna: From time to time, we create new designs and new collections. Especially for Christmas, Valentineâ??s Day, Easter. Many of our items are made for custom orders, so it makes them special.

Alice: Can you talk us through the inspiration behind your collections?

Anna: As creative artists, we look for various signs and sounds in nature as our primary source of inspiration.
We love our little balcony garden and the flowers there because it is so exciting to watch things grow.
We really love walking through the forest at any time of year. But, probably, fall is our favorite â?? perfect conditions for taking photographs and splendid colors. So, we take the most beautiful photos of toys in the forest. You can find our photos on our Facebook page.



Alice: What materials and fabrics do you like working with?

Anna: Each of our creations is made by hand from natural materials, like mohair, alpaca, suede and wool felt. We also like natural colors, such as white, beige, brown and black.



Alice: What do you think gives teddy bears their enduring appeal?

Anna: Kate and I love making items that bring light to someoneâ??s day. We love creating something that someone will love or that will bring light to their day and we love the process of making, packaging, and sending work to the customer.

Alice: Which of your teddies are you most fond of?

Anna: We love all of them.

CATEGORY

1. INTERVIEWS

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