



Nisha Blackwell
Owner, Knotzland

2021 *Woman of Distinction* **Entrepreneurship**

Nisha Blackwell is a Pittsburgh native and the founder and lead designer of Knotzland Bowties, an environmentally and socially sustainable company that sources, rescues, and repurposes discarded textiles into stylish bow ties that are intentionally made through providing flexible work-from-home sewing opportunities to people around the region. Over the years, Knotzland has rescued over 3,000 pounds of materials from entering landfills.

The company has cultivated a community of investors, mentors, and loyal customers through participation in Pittsburgh's bustling ecosystem of high-impact creative hubs, accelerators, and business incubators in the city. This community has allowed Nisha to shape a business that not only provides high-quality wearables but also serves customers all over the world with four employees and a network of 26 work-from-home sewists.

Nisha's community service experiences shaped through AmeriCorps, Pittsburgh Center for Creative Reuse, Neighborhood Allies, GTECH, and Strong Women Strong Girls reflect her lifelong passion for and involvement in sustainable, circular community-building.

Her work has been recognized by Facebook's Small Business Council and was named in *Pittsburgh Magazine's* 40 under 40. Nisha also received Pittsburgh Technology Council's 2017 Creator of the Year, Style Week Pittsburgh's 2016 Designer of the Year, Homewood Community through Council Engagement Award in 2016. She has also been featured in international markets and expansive projects with Google Creative Lab, NYC, The W Hotel, and Macy's. Nisha's work is currently and most recently exhibited at the Carnegie Museum of Pittsburgh, Frick Museum, Concept Art Gallery, and selected by the Smithsonian Women's Committee for Craft Optimism.

Nisha currently serves as a business coach for ORIGINS and on the board of the Andy Warhol Museum.

