

# Needle Felting

Needle (or punch) felting is a soap-and-water-free way to make fantastic felt art works.

Contemporary fibre artists and felt makers have adapted this commercial process to be used by hand. Using a Felting Needle, it is now possible to make elaborately detailed, well controlled, two and three-dimensional pieces of art from Merino Wool Tops that would be difficult to achieve using traditional wet felt making.

Felting needles are made from hardened steel, usually with a triangular profile, and are very sharp. They have tiny barbs or notches near the point of the needle. The brittle needles are likely to break if they are flexed, they require a straight



up and down action into the loose fibre.

When the needle is repeatedly poked in and out of a mass of loose wool, its "barbs" tangle and interlocks the fibre and eventually makes felt.

Needle felting doesn't require strength, but it does require patience and concentration.

The needles are very sharp, so a block of foam rubber is an essential piece of equipment to prevent the needle pricking the artist's fingers.

*Deanne Clark will be conducting a full day workshop "Dry Felting" on Wednesday 31st August 2005. Check our website or the Workshop insert for more information.*



## MATERIALS

- Felting Needle
- Chenille stems
- Felt Squares
- Merino Wool Tops
- Zart Paper Magiclays
- Folley Bells 10 mm
- Jug Beads
- Arbee Craft Glue
- Foam Rubber block



## BODY

1. Use five Chenille Stems to create the armature for the body as shown in the diagram.
2. Use lengths of Merino Wool Tops to dry felt the body, arms and legs around the Chenille Stem armature.

3. Dry felt the shoes and hands separately and then attach them using the Felting Needle to the appropriate limbs.

## COSTUME

1. Choose three colours of Felt and cut out three rectangles, one in each colour and three different lengths. 12 x 20 cm, 12 x 24 cm and one 12 x 28 cm. Fold each on in half and cut away triangles from and across the short ends.
2. Dry felt some Merino Wool tops in a pattern on the shortest rectangle.
3. Lay the three rectangles of felt on top of each other from largest to smallest, with the patterned piece lying on top. Fold all three felt rectangles in half

together and cut (on the fold) a small semi circle of felt away from the mid point of all three rectangles.

4. Keep the three folded together and slip them over the loop of the Chenille Stem neck.
5. Use the triangles of felt that were cut away from the rectangles to glue around the neck as a collar. Glue on beads or bells to the front of the costume on to the point of each triangle.
6. Glue a strip of Felt to each side of the costume under each arm to keep the back and front of the costume together.

## HEAD

1. Use a small ball of Zart Paper Magiclays to model a head and neck, exaggerate the nose,

eyebrows and lips. Keep the neck hollow for the Chenille Stem loop to nestle into.

2. Lightly paint with a flesh coloured paint.
3. Glue on beads for eyes.
4. Glue on tufts of Wool Tops for the hair.

## HAT

1. Use the Felting Needle to create a hat and decorate it with bells and beads.

2. Glue the hat on to the Jester's Head. Use a Hot Melt Glue Gun to attach the head to the Chenille Stem loop of the body. Tuck the loop up into the hollow of the neck and glue it into place. Glue the neck of the costume around the Magiclays neck.

## 3D picture



## MATERIALS

- Synthetic Wool Tops Cream
- Merino Wool Tops
- Felting Needle
- Foam Rubber

1. Use a Fabric Transfer Pencil to draw a design on to Bond Paper. Iron the design face down on to a felt square. Remember your design will be the reverse of the image drawn. To create the same image, photocopy the design on to a sheet of acetate that is suitable

for the photocopier. By flipping the acetate image over and re copying it, your design will be in reverse before ironing.

2. Place the felt over a block of foam rubber and take a small portion of black Merino Wool Tops and stretch it out into a long length. Position this length on to the felt square. This will be the outline colour for the design. Start to work the black wool into the felt, by pushing the Felting Needle gently in and out of the wool. You will note the wool begins to bind into the piece of felt. The more you needle it the better the result. Lift the felt square

frequently to be sure it is not sticking to the foam. Continue this process until your outline is complete.

3. Add colours of Wool Tops to the design using the same process as described in Step 2.
4. Small features are added into the design by needling over the top of an existing colour.

Create your own doll or creature using the Felting Needle and Wool Tops with this method.

1. Take a roll of cream Synthetic Wool Tops and begin needling the shape with the Felting Needle to form the body. Use a large block of foam rubber to work on so that the needle goes through the Wool Tops and into the foam, without pricking the fingers. Move the Felting Needle in and out of the Wool Tops in a straight motion. Start with fairly deep jabs to make sure you are entangling the

inner fibres. Turn your roll frequently to be sure it is not sticking to the foam. Use the needle to shape your core to resemble the spider body. Work the core until it holds together firmly.

2. When the core holds firmly together and is in the shape of a spider's body lie three black Chenille Bumps across the underbelly for the legs of the spider. To secure the legs in place, use a length of Wool Tops across the mid point of each of the bumps and dry felt this length into the body.
3. Glue small tufts of coloured Merino

Wool Tops to the end of each leg.

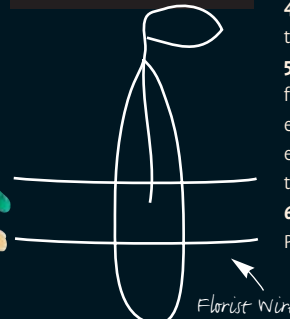
4. Bend the legs until the spider stands upright.
5. Use the Felting Needle to felt small tufts of coloured Merino Wool into the spider's back.
6. Glue on Sequin eyes and a Glitter Pom Pom nose.



## Spider

## MATERIALS

- Synthetic Wool Tops Cream
- Coloured Merino Wool Tops
- Felting Needle
- Black Chenille Bumps
- Sequins Large, sequins Flat
- Glitter Pom Pom 12 mm
- Arbee Craft Glue



## MATERIALS

- Synthetic Wool Tops Cream
- Merino Wool Tops
- Florist Wire
- Plasticine

## Zebra

1. Use the Synthetic Wool Tops to dry felt the core body, neck and head. A length of Florist wire might be used to give the head and neck more stability by dry felting around the wire.
2. Use a Felting Needle to cover the core with coloured Merino Wool Tops, add stripes of a contrasting colour and tufts of colour for the tail and mane.
3. Add eyes and nostrils with black Wool Tops.
4. The ears may be dry felted separately and attached to the head using the Felting Needle.
5. Thread two lengths of Florist Wire through the body for the legs, make sure the four legs are the same length either side of the body. Dry felt the Wool Tops around each of the wire legs. Use deep jabs of the needle where the legs join the body.
6. Poke the end of each wire leg into a ball of Plasticine to enable the zebra to stand.

