

## *Stages of wet felting...*



1. The first step is to lay out the foundation, three or four layers with the final layer being a blend of shades and tones but no image. Here is an example of a layout I demonstrated during a class.

Some of you have particular designs in mind but in many ways, it is better to have a very vague idea so that you can play freely. But you are welcome to have a fixed sort of idea.... it is a bit harder. This sample to the left increasingly reminded me of an underwater landscape and so I followed what the image suggested to me.

Then comes the first stage of adding embellishments. I recommend fabrics first. Here is a picture of my box of fabrics. I lie. Here is a photo of one of my many many boxes of fabrics. But this is the one I usually produce at workshops.



**2. FABRICS.** Natural fabrics are the best but synthetic can be used but make sure you felt with warm water (not hot) and gently and slowly, giving time for fibres to migrate. Raw (or frayed after cutting) edges felt best. If you want to hide sharp cut 'edges' or if you are not sure if they will felt, it is wise to put light wisps of wool, same colour as the background wool maybe, to 'glue' the fabric down. Laying a strand of wispy knitting yarn across the fabric helps pin it down. With silk scarves, you can snip bits of fabric off (remembering that you cannot felt silk to silk.... There always needs to be wool) to create leaves or flowers and so forth.

After fabric I usually add the wool fibres.

**3. KNITTING YARN** Best to use pure wool or at the worst, with only a small percentage of acrylic. Mohair is great cos it's hairy. You can take three or four colours, create several short lengths and cut tiny snippets off the end to create freckled places of colour. Placing these over fabric will help pin the fabric down. You can wet the yarn and then lay it in position where you want to have the wool lie. You can write words with the yarn, or make roads or branches, or whatever.....



**4. WOOL FIBRE** You can add wool roving at any point. You can also blend colours and snip little bits of fluff here and there. You can twizzle the ends of a tuft, and then pull open the sides so that you make large petal shapes. You can take fibres, wet them well in soapy water, put your finger on the end, and pull the wool away... good way to make stars, lines, grasses, flax, etc.. You can spiral the wool into sort of lollipop whirls of colour and place them where you want them.

**5. PREFELT** Prefelt also helps to pin down fabrics and can be cut into any shape you desire... stars, petals, hearts, leaves, circles, spirals etc. . Here is a photo of my box of prefelts. In the underwater picture you can see the prefelts... the orange circles. The branching 'coral tree' is made by pulling out wet rainbow 'tops'.



**6. SILKS** The last stage is usually the best time to add silk... spaghetti silk, tussah silk, mulberry silk, sari silk floor sweepings, silk hankies, broken silk threads, and so on... but only put them where they are on wool. If in doubt, put a whisker of wool over the top of silks to ensure their attaching. Nepps always need a whisker of wool to keep them in place.



**7.** The final stage of felting is to 'full' it. This means quite a lot of patient rubbing, moving gradually onto rolling, and on to massaging, and so on. It takes about as long as the original laying out. Be warned...( I usually never warn people and they are always a bit disappointed that they now have to work a bit). Fear not, all will be well. We are allowed to sit down at this point! 😊