



Felt Adorned: Jewellery (and Sculpture) on a Precious Scale

a workshop with Martien van Zuilen

www.martienvanzuilen.com

Class Description:

Learn a variety of innovative techniques to make uniquely shaped components suitable for jewellery, small sculptural works, embellishments and more. Make ingenious beads (aptly named Scrunch, Spike, Dotty, Fangs, ColorCuts, and Twirls), incorporate wire, recycled materials and tubing, and create one-of-a-kind Pendants, Brooches, Necklaces and more, more, more... This is a hands-on workshop with lots of 'play time', with a focus on well-made felt and inspiration for future projects to boot!

In this class, we will mainly use hand-dyed **Fine Merino wool** (18 micron). Martien will supply some of this wool and a range of other materials for use in the workshop. You will also receive class notes.

MATERIALS LIST – please bring the following:

Fibres

- Fine Merino wool fibres, including one length of tops measuring at least 1 metre in length. Remember that the scale of the work is small so bring quantities accordingly, and not the whole studio... ☺
- A small assortment of novelty fibres such as silk fibres, silk hankies, scraps of voile fabrics (no synthetics) etc
- A small assortment of threads and yarns, ie. embroidery threads, sewing threads, and woollen, novelty or hand-spun yarns

Equipment

- Grip-mat – the thinner variety (not the thick, spongy one). A piece measuring approximately 60 x 90 cms will be plenty
- A small fulling mat (ribbed stair-tread or similar, which will provide more friction than grip-mat)
- Two small-medium size old towels
- Plastic container: a 4-litre square ice cream container is ideal (no buckets please)
- Your preferred soap suitable for felt making (Earth dishwashing liquid will be available for general use)
- Sharp, fine-pointed scissors
- A *sharp* craft knife and if you have it a small cutting mat (mats can be shared)
- A selection of *long* knitting needles in varying sizes; thick to thin and *preferably metal*, 5 different sizes
- General sewing equipment (sewing needles – all sharp pointed and some with a large eye, pins, and tape-measure)
- Notebook & pens, or other method of recording information
- If you have them, please bring an awl and a pair of small pliers (no need to buy them especially as they can be shared and Martien will bring some tools to share)
- Feel free to bring a small container of beads and jewellery components, buttons/precious stones, fine gauge jewellery wire, cord and any other jewellery-making 'treasures'. Please note that the focus of this class is on making felt; some of your treasures will be a source of inspiration and may assist in finishing some items later.

Some additional jewellery findings will be available for optional sale (credit card facilities will be available).

Any questions regarding this list? Contact Martien on martienvanzuilen@gmail.com, ahead of time

I look forward to seeing you in October! *Martien*

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Martien van Zuilen

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Martien van Zuilen (born The Netherlands, 1962) is an established felt artisan and fibre artist based in Perth, Western Australia. She uses wool fibres, mixed media and collected objects to create complex felted forms, sculptural works, wearables and distinctive accessories. Martien exhibits her artworks nationally and internationally. Since the late 1980s she has delivered felt-making workshops throughout Australia, as well as in Europe and throughout the USA.

Martien was instrumental in establishing the Victorian Feltmakers Inc. in 1995 and for 18 years (1998-2016) she coordinated the Australian National Yurt Project. In 2013, she completed her PhD (Anthropology) with an ethnographic thesis on the significance of women's fibre art practices within the context of Australia's cultural landscape.

Martien is the current editor of Australia's national magazine FELT, and the Convenor of Fibres West Inc. (www.fibreswest.com.au). Alongside her studio practice, Martien maintains an active teaching schedule and undertakes curatorial work. She has written extensively about the value of the handmade and the meaning of making in contemporary arts practice. Through her artisan dyeing studio *Colourant Dyeworks*, she supplies artists with high quality hand-dyed fibres and fabrics.

Martien's artwork is published in numerous international publications, including *Showcase 500 Art Necklaces* (book), *Surface Design Association* (USA), *Textile Fibre Forum* (Australia), *Felt Matters* (UK), *ViltKontakt* (Netherlands), *Fiber Art Now* (USA), *Yurts Tipis and Benders* (book), *FELT* (Australia), *verFiltz Und zugeNäht* (Germany), the 2015 book *Pots and Pods for Feltmakers*, *Adventures in the Third Dimension*, the 2016 book *Worldwide Colours of Felt*, the 2019 book *The Women's Gallery 1988-1995*, and the 2020 book *Felt Forward: New Technologies in Feltmaking*. Her 2018 work *Standing Tall* (5 hand-felted vessels) was selected for the juried exhibition 'Family Matters' in the US (Surface Design Association).

Statement of Practice:

Making felt is a tactile exploration; a hands-on process of transforming loose wool fibres into durable and distinctive objects. Throughout the years, my sense of curiosity and excitement when making felt is undiminished. I delight in the freedom of the medium and the potential to add layers of meaning and intent along the way. Process is everything. What matters is an intentional engagement, and the interplay of materials, experience, design, and ideas.

I have been a maker of felt for over 35 years. During this time, insights about the significance of my materials have refined my focus while various influences have had a direct bearing on the development and direction of my work.

In 1997 I travelled to Mongolia where I spent time among nomadic people and slept in their felt-covered tents. The seasonal and communal nature of environments in which people survive and thrive with so little, and the importance of felt to people's daily existence struck a heart-felt chord and touched me deeply, culminating in postgraduate studies in anthropology and a profound effect on my arts practice and creative work. For example, a recurring, explorative theme in my art practice is that of shelter; considering what is truly required to survive, thrive, to be content, to make, to belong.

The significance of my artmaking lies in the engagement with an ever-evolving process, a gradual, creative becoming, never finite. Along the way, my work aims to strike a balance; between what wool fibres do in a very practical sense (they interlock to form a durable textile) and the potential to convey a heart-felt story in visual and tangible form.

