

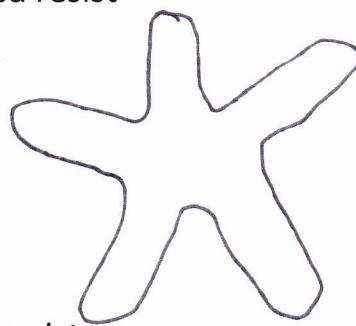
3-D Felting Workshop, 2-3 Dec 2015

By **Soosie Jobson**, notes taken by Susan Swain

Soosie brought along a huge selection of her 3-D felted objects, for us to look at, learn from and drool over. Her latest work was a succulent garden, all made in felt.

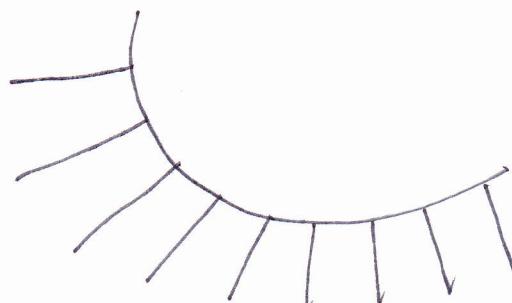
As she started the class she had this to say:

1. Word of warning: work **SMALL!** It's really fiddley work
2. You **NEED** to know how to work with "resists" in order to do this work
3. Terminology that she will be using during the workshop:
 - a. Laying: putting wool down
 - b. Layers: 2 layers of wool, laid at approx. 90 degrees to each other
 - c. Layerings: another level of 2 layers of wool laid on top of previous
 - d. Differential Weights: different thickness of layers in different areas of the piece (thick layers and thin layers on the same piece)
 - e. Embellishment Layer: colours laid within the piece that are revealed when cutting into the felted wool
4. You work reasonably dry in this way of felting (because when it's too wet, the wool stretches and you end up getting "ridges" on the surface and seams form—that you don't want in your piece)
5. Less is More, lay the wool, sprinkle it lightly, then "press" it down with a piece of bubble wrap, to force the water into the wool, so it compresses
6. Resists: This is a veined resist



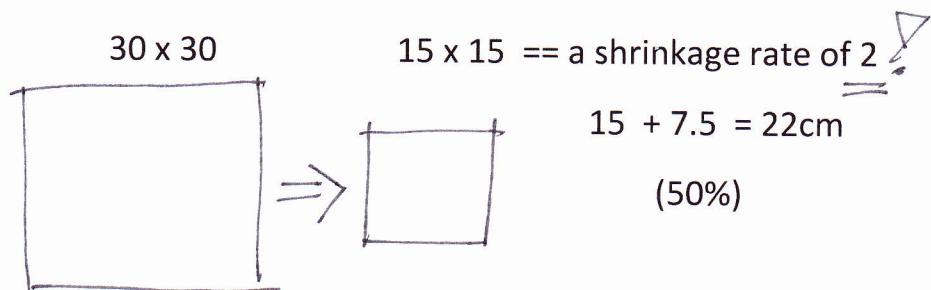
plan view

7. Resists: this is a solid resist

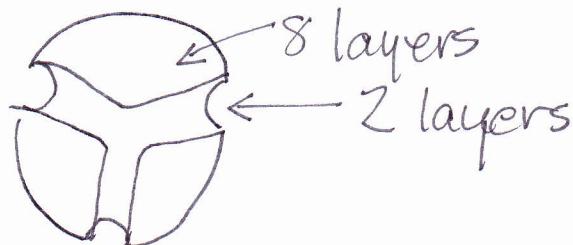


plan view

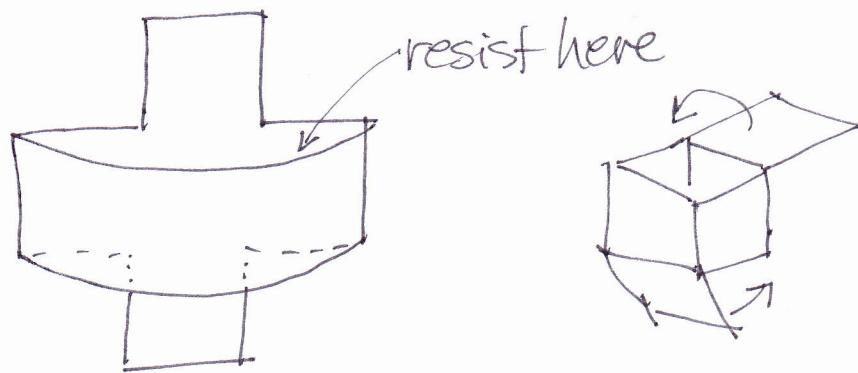
8. Shrinkage Rates: you can only work a % of shrinkage when you know the final size



9. Thick wool shrinks at a different rate than thin wool



10. Geometric Shapes: to make a box made of felt, see pattern

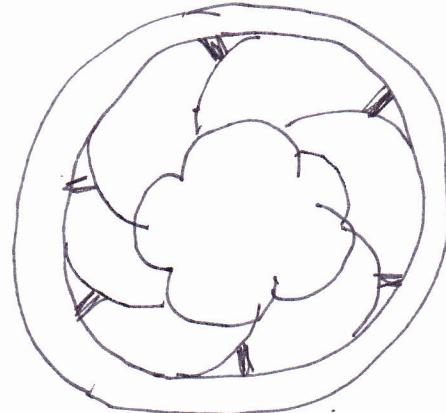
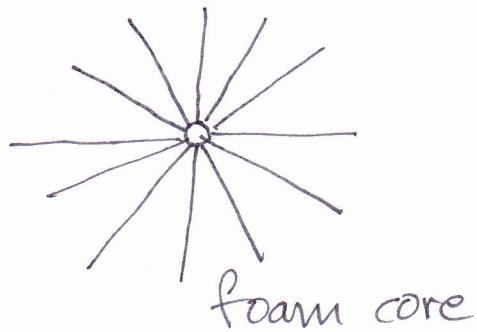
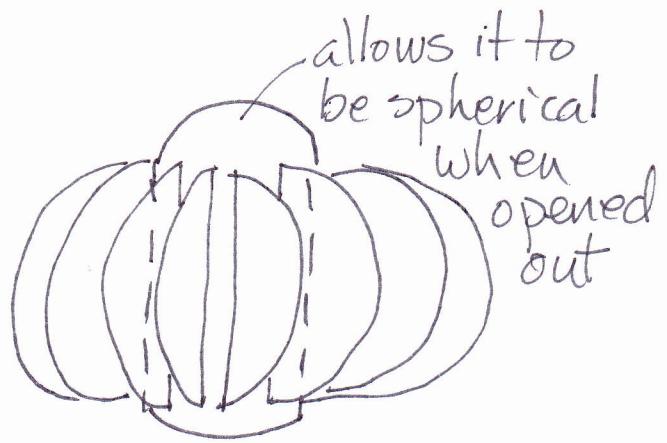
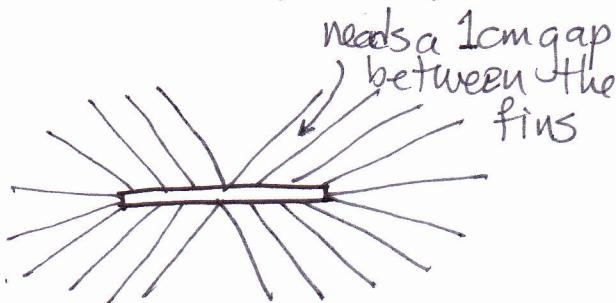


11. Resist Materials: anything that is non-porous, like plastics and foam underlays

- Blue underlay is thinner
- White underlay is thicker –she uses this
- Painter's drop sheet plastic, the thicker variety

12. She always uses 3M packing tape to hold her resist patterns together, as she has found that the other tapes tend to dissolve a bit, and come loose, with the amount of felting that you have to do on these pieces

13. See a variety of resist patterns



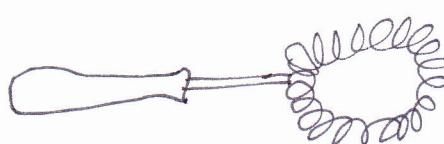
14. Cutting the wool with scissors: when you cut the wool roving with scissors, the ends tend to fray out a bit. This means that the ends start digging in to the adjacent wool, and mesh in quickly, and form a solid joint. So if you want to embed something, cut the wool and felt it on.

15. Pre-laid: laid out and partially felted

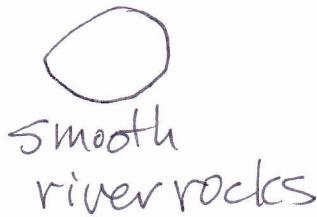
16. In Situ: laid on a resist

17. You can always stitch into your felt to get something to attach where you want it

18. Felting tools for 3-D felting, she uses some of these tools



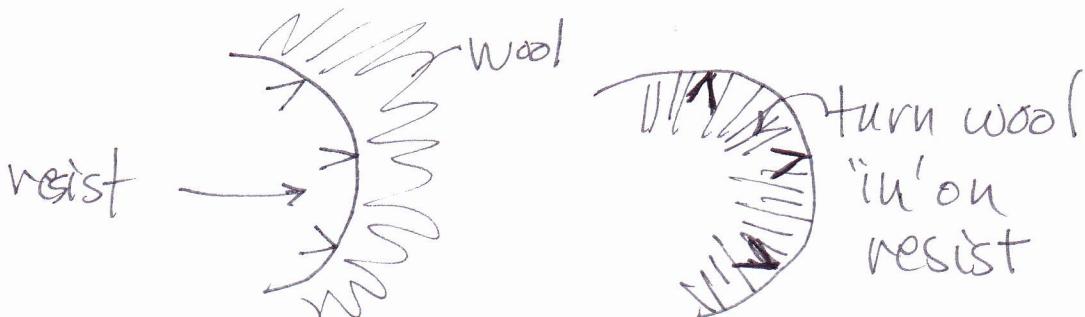
food whisk



Black rigid PVC electrical
conduit

19. Isolate each resist, using a piece of the drop sheet plastic, to prevent it felting into an adjacent layer of wool

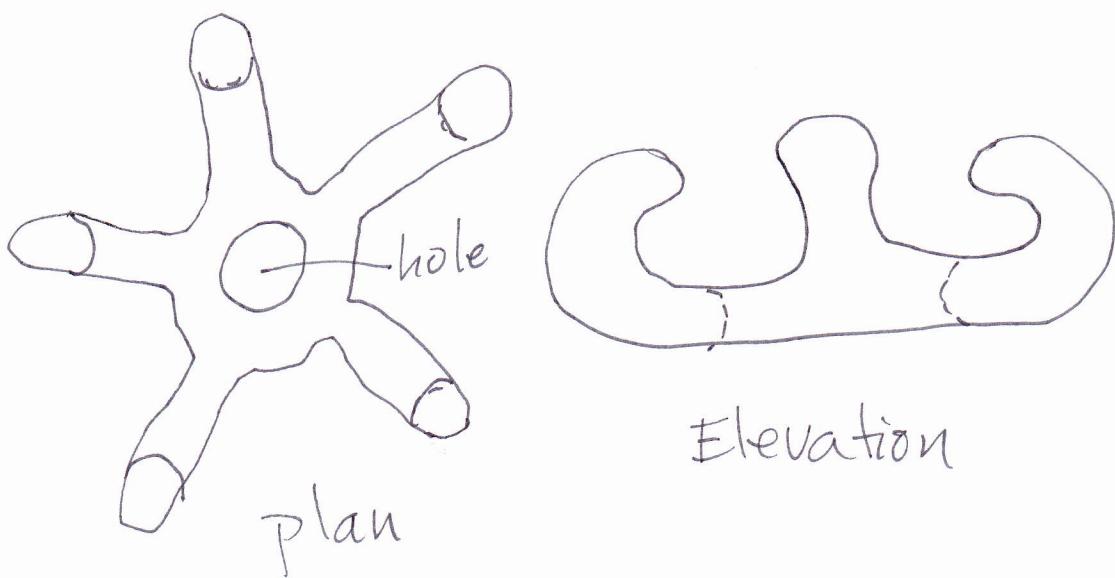
20. When you have laid out the wool, and want to turn the piece over, remember to "ease the seams", just like you would do in dressmaking



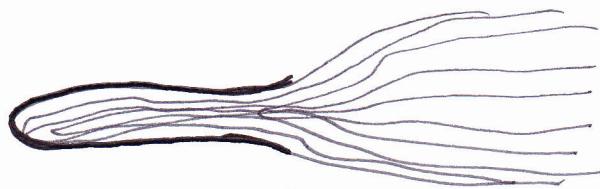
21. Never handle wet wool without having soapy hands – or it will pill
22. Thick wool is thick/multiple layers, not using a wool like Corriedale, which is stiff and thick wool naturally. She still uses fine Merino wool for her 3-D pieces, made up of fine, even layers.
23. Be sure to weigh the wool and divide it into the numbers of pieces you will be laying, so all the pieces have the same weight of wool.
24. If you lay the wool unevenly, you'll end up with an uneven shape (due to shrinkage)

25. Pattern-making:

- a. Draw what you think the resist will look like
- b. She will always help us imagine the shapes needed for a pattern
- c. If you are doing a resist, don't leave a gap in the joint between where the tape attaches the "fin" to the main body of the pattern, or water will enter it, and work the tape look, and that piece of resist pattern will fall off before the piece is completed.
- d. Negative space shapes (like a donut) and very complicated to make)



26. A fin on a cactus in profile



*Cross-section
of fin*

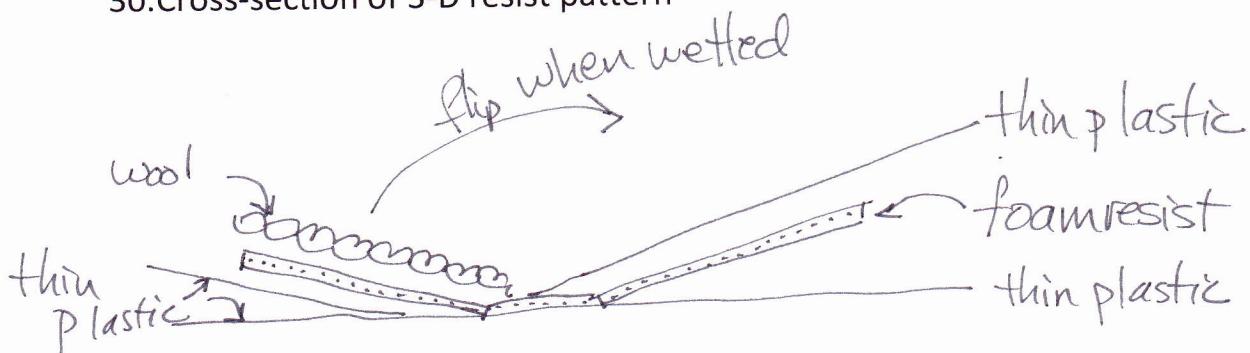
fully felted → not fully felted

27. If you lay the wool too thinly, it will shrink more.

28. Always lay the wool in even numbers of layers (2, 4, 6, 8...)

29. You must make a sample of a wearable art garment, using the exact materials as for the final fabric piece

30. Cross-section of 3-D resist pattern

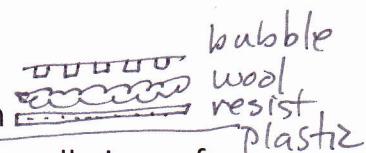


31. Soap: pH level changes in the water, so it opens the fibres to felt quicker

- Vegetable Oil soaps change it to the perfect pH level (like Olive oil)
- Don't use dish washing liquid, it won't give the proper pH
- Keep a bucket with clean water to rinse your hands off, and be sure to remove all your jewellery.

32. Starting to lay the Wool: cut plastic for the resist 1st, tape the pattern together, ready for use

- Lay 2 layers of wool on top of the resist at 90 degrees to each other
- Sprinkle on some soapy water
- Then pat down with bubble wrap, bubble-side down
- Then finished, flip it over to the next fin, inserting a small piece of thin plastic between the layers to prevent them felting together
- You'll need lots of wool, as that's what makes the shape and helps it hold the shape once the felt is dry (it's NOT like laying wool for a garment)



- f. The more wool you are stacking up, the more you have to “push” the water through the layers. She waters down at least every 4 layers of laid wool.
- g. Rub, rub, rub on all surfaces, in between the resists.
- h. When you are ready to put it in the microwave, or the clothes drier, always put it in a plastic bag. IN the drier, add something to give it some “weight” so it flops against the sides of the drier, so it will drop and beat itself to “felt”.
- i. The foam resist may come out immediately.
- j. Soap your hands, (w/o any jewellery) and rub the ‘fins’ until they are rigid and standing tall, all by themselves.
- k. Toss until you see that the template needs to come out. Make a small slit (minimum hole) in a discreet position on the piece. Insert some needle-nosed pliers, and grab the end of the foam template, and start twisting it, until you actually wind it around itself, so that you can easily extract it through the hole.
- l. You can stuff the shape with plastic bits, or cushion stuffing or wool.
- m. Sew up the hole where you removed the template
- n. Using other stitching where appropriate to form the shape desired
- o. Put it in the sun to dry
- p. When you complete the “project”, don’t be disappointed with the outcome, rather work with the shape. Remember, it comes out as it was meant to be!