

SPIRITED HANDS STUDIO

presents Fiber Artists

SALLY ANN HALL and SUSAN THOMPSON

Hailing from Tucson, AZ, we are Sally Hall and Susan Thompson—a mother-daughter team of fiber artists who create handmade felt at Spirited Hands Studio. We use the ancient art of wet felting to create a myriad of fine art wearables such as scarves, vests, jackets, hats, as well as sculptures, wall hangings, and rugs. Together we use wet felting's eco friendly techniques to pursue our love of fiber art. From the shearing of the sheep to the finished piece of felt, the process is in harmony with living things and Mother Earth!

Handmade felt isn't your usual craft store felt. It's not knitting or weaving. It's not sewing or crocheting. The technique of using wool fibers, moisture, and agitation dates back thousands of years and is the same process used to make the homes (yurts or gers), rugs, clothing, and decorations of the nomadic peoples of the east.

So, how do you make felt? The first step is in the shearing of the sheep. This gives the animal a "haircut" and leaves their beautiful fleece ready for cleaning, carding, and dyeing. If you could look at a wool fiber under a microscope you would see each one has a layer of scales along its length. If you take those wool fibers and lay them out in a layer, add moisture (soap and water) and rub them or roll them between your hands the fibers will want to come together and tighten up as a unit. After a certain amount of rubbing or rolling the fibers will become permanently entwined to create a lovely textile.

The next step is to decide just what you would like to make. The possibilities for design and finished product are endless. The feltmaker will choose different types of wool for different end results. For instance, they may use a fine Merino wool from a Merino sheep to create a softly draping scarf or garment whereas wool from a Navajo Churro sheep will lend itself to the hard edged stand up angles of sculpture or durability required for rugs. Add to that hand-dyeing and color blending of the wool using carders (combs) and the fiber artist will feel like they are "painting" with wool. The textures, colors, and open ended possibilities all sing together to make wet felting a truly exciting and unique journey into the fiber arts. The only limits are the ones you set yourself.

There has been a resurgence of this ancient process in the last 15 years or so bringing it to the fore of the current day fiber arts community. Many fiber artists are pushing the envelope to see what they can achieve with a little wool, moisture, and agitation! Felted art pieces range from seamless garments to whimsical sculpture to fine art museum displays. Utilitarian juxtaposed with subjective art pieces and everything in between make wet felting a versatile and enticing medium to work in.

With over 25+ years of experience, we offer classes in wet-felting as well as gallery hours by

appointment for viewing and or purchasing our hand felted art work. We frequently host Open Studio Tours and Trunk Shows. Stop by Spirited Hands Studio to meet us and see and touch the magic of handmade felt!

520-873-7388 www.spiritedhandsstudio.com 851 N. Corinth Ave Tucson, AZ (Speedway/Wilmot area)

