



NEEDLE-FELTED FIBRE PAINTING KIT INSTRUCTIONS

002K FLUTTER | SKILL LEVEL 1

FINISHED SIZE 7" x 5" (177.8mm x 127mm) | TIME REQUIRED: 6–10 hours



Welcome to the Sarah Ritchie 'Flutter' needle-felted fibre painting kit!

This needle-felted project captures the delicate beauty and vibrant colours of a butterfly, adding a touch of nature's elegance to your home.

Ideal for beginner needle-felters (Skill Level 1), 'Flutter' is perfect for those looking to learn needle felting skills and create a beautiful, eye-catching piece.

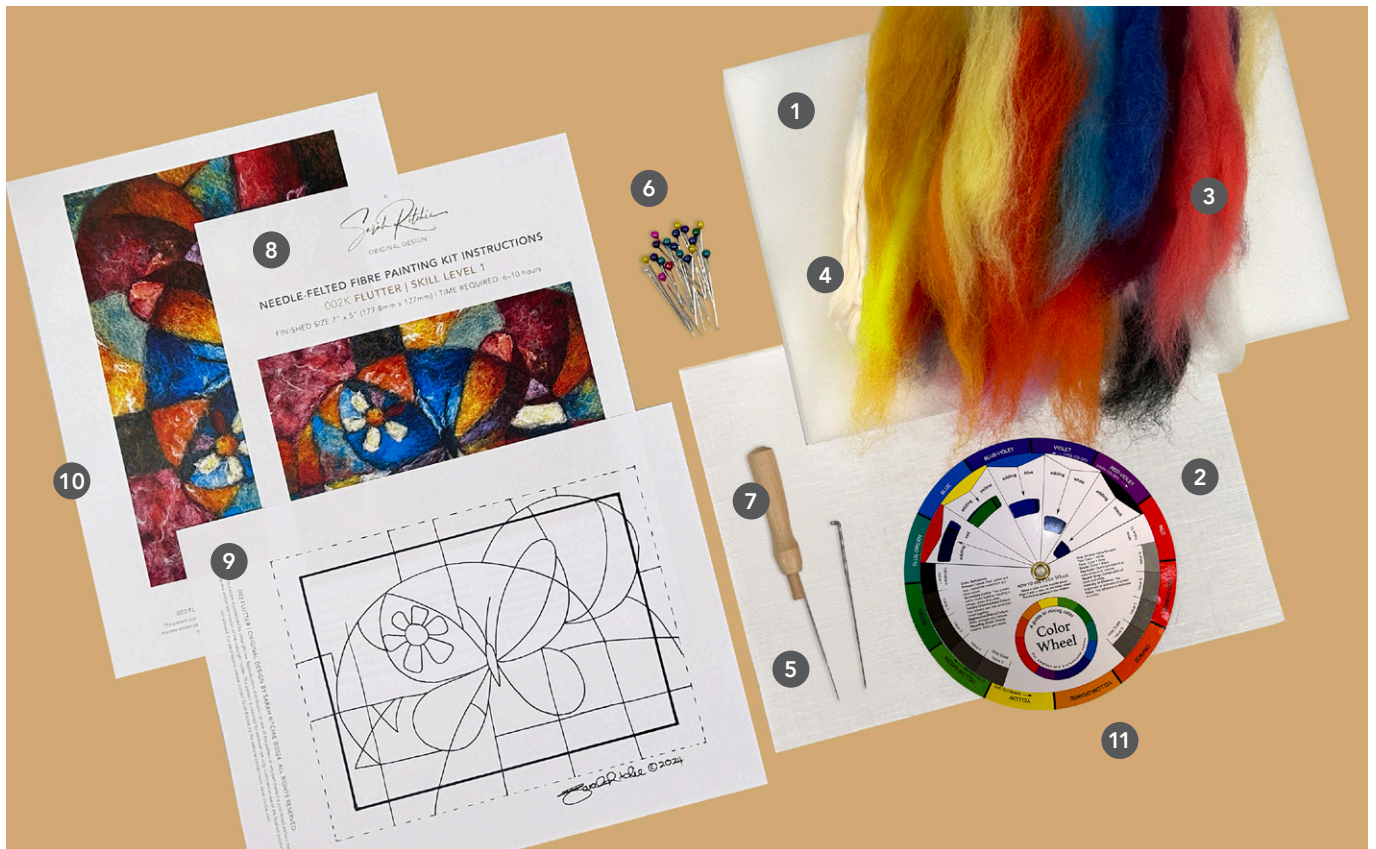
This is not a colour-by-numbers kit. You can directly copy

the colour sample included, or make your own colour choices and combinations. Fibre painting gives you the freedom to create however you want!

I am thrilled to have you embark on this crafting journey with me. Needle-felting is not just a hobby; it's an art form that allows you to express your creativity and create something truly unique. Take your time, enjoy the process, and let your creativity shine through. Happy felting!

SARAH RITCHIE | sarah-ritchie.com

KIT CONTENTS



- 1 Foam base x 1
- 2 Cotton/linen fabric x 1
- 3 Wool fibre (30 colours)
- 4 Cotton fibre (the thicker, white fibre)
- 5 Felting needles x 2 (36 gauge)
- 6 Pins x 20
- 7 Needle handle
- 8 Instruction booklet
- 9 Pattern
- 10 Colour example
- 11 Colour wheel

Items supplied in this kit may vary slightly from photographs shown.

Additional equipment you will need for transferring the pattern to the fabric (not included in the kit):

- Fine black permanent marker or black ballpoint pen.
- Masking tape or other tape.
- A ruler or straight edge.

Optional extra equipment (not included in the kit):

- Two small carding brushes (or two wire dog brushes). For this kit you will be blending fibre by hand. Carding brushes allow you to blend fibre better and faster.
- 7" x 5" (117.8mm x 127mm) frame of your choice to display your fibre painting.



*Example shown:
Ashford Flick Carder,
ashfordcraftshop.co.nz*

For video kit instructions please visit: sarah-ritchie.com/002-flutter-instructions

FOR YOUR SAFETY

HANDLING NEEDLES SAFELY

- Always handle your needle with care to avoid accidental injury.
- Keep your fingers clear of the needle's path as you work.
- Insert the needle straight in and pull it straight out; avoid bending or twisting the needle to prevent breakage.
- Keep your fingers protected, especially when working with smaller areas or small bits of fibre.
- Keep needles out of the reach of children and animals and store them safely when not in use.

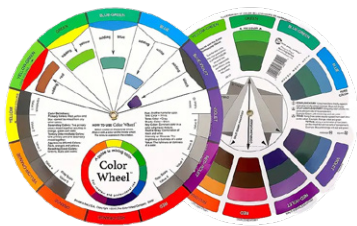
LOOKING AFTER YOUR BODY

- Ensure you have a comfortable and supportive chair that allows you to maintain good posture while working.

- Sit upright with your back straight and shoulders relaxed.
- Needle-felting is a repetitive activity. Take regular breaks to rest your hands and wrist and avoid injury.
- Stretch your fingers, hands, and wrists frequently to keep them flexible and reduce the risk of RSI.
- Use a needle handle (included in the kit) to help make needle-felting more comfortable.
- Work in a well-lit area to reduce eye strain and ensure you can see your work clearly.
- Use a desk lamp or natural light to illuminate your workspace effectively.

By following these safety tips, you can enjoy your needle-felting experience while minimising the risk of injury and discomfort. Happy felting!

COLOUR THEORY TIPS



Unlike painting, where you can mix colours directly, needle-felting requires you to blend fibres to create the *illusion* of different colours. This makes understanding colour theory even more important, as it helps you achieve the desired effects by combining fibres effectively.

You can use the colour wheel (included in this kit), to assist you to make colour choices that work well together, including complementary, split-complementary, triad, tetrad and analogous colour combinations.

Primary colours

The primary colours are red, blue, and yellow. These colours cannot be created by mixing other colours and serve as the base for creating all other colours.

Secondary colours

Secondary colours are green, orange, and purple. These are created by blending two primary colours:

Red + Blue = Purple

Blue + Yellow = Green

Yellow + Red = Orange

Tertiary colours

Tertiary colours are created by blending a primary colour with a secondary colour. Examples include red-orange, yellow-green, and blue-purple.

Complementary colours

Complementary colours are opposite each other on the colour wheel (e.g. red and green, blue and orange, yellow and purple). When used together, they create strong contrast and can make each other appear more vibrant.

Analogous colours

Analogous colours are next to each other on the colour wheel (e.g. yellow, yellow-green, and green). These colours often work well together and create serene and comfortable designs.

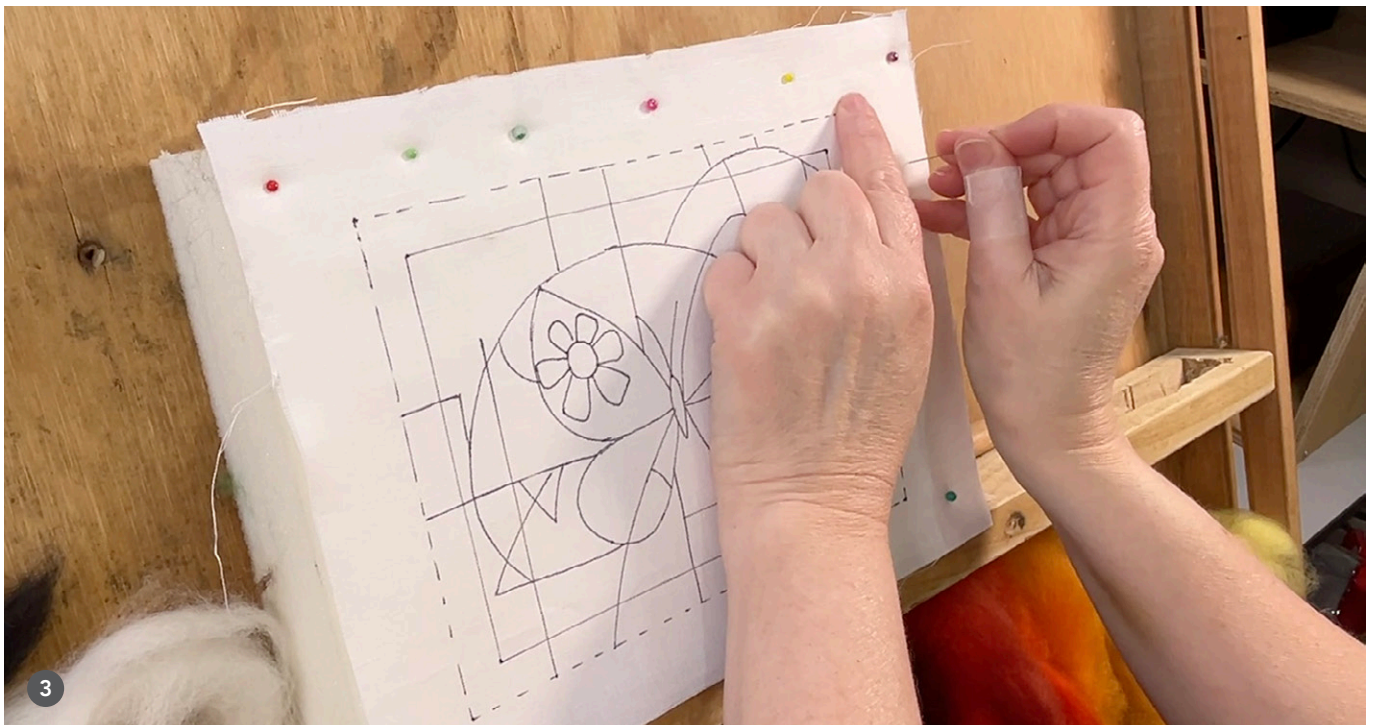
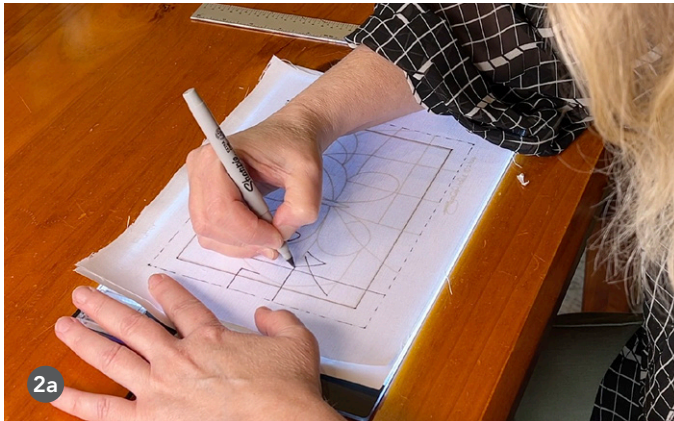
Creating shades and tints

To create shades, blend a small amount of black with a colour. For tints, blend a small amount of white. This can help you create more dimension and interest in your artwork.

Why it works

Have you ever wondered why some colour combinations sing whilst others clash or look muddy? That's colour theory in action. If you follow these tried and tested colour rules, you can't go wrong and you'll end up with artwork that looks delicious!

1 | PREPARATION



- 1 Lay out all the kit contents.
- 2a Use a light pad, or 2b tape the pattern and fabric to a window (so you can see the pattern lines clearly), then trace the image onto the fabric with a permanent marker or black ballpoint pen. Include both the solid and dotted outlines in your transfer. The solid outline is 7" x 5" (177.8mm x 127mm), fitting a standard 7" x 5" (177.8mm x 127mm) photo frame. The dotted line indicates the extent of the 'bleed' area (between the solid and dotted lines), which will not be visible in a frame.
- 3 Pin the fabric base to the foam pad (around the perimeter and outside the dotted lines), ensuring the fabric is taut but not overstretched.

BASIC NEEDLE-FELTING TECHNIQUE

Select the wool fibre in the colour you want to use. Pull off a small piece of fibre (about the size of a coin) to start with. You can always add more wool as needed and you'll soon get the feel of how much wool to use for different-sized areas.

Pull the fibre apart repeatedly with your fingers to 'rough it up' a bit, which makes the fibre easier to needle-felt.

Hold your felting needle in your writing hand. Place the fibre on the section where you want it to go, and hold it in place lightly with your index finger. Begin by gently poking/needling the wool into the fabric base. Be careful to keep your fingers clear of the needle's path to avoid injury (it's handy to

keep plasters close by). Use a straight up-and-down motion, needling the wool repeatedly. The more you needle the wool into the fabric, the denser and firmer the fibres will become. To replicate the style of needle-felting in this pattern, you will need to needle the fibres a lot to flatten the wool to the surface of the fabric. Don't worry if the fibres are somewhat loose on Layer 1, as you have Layers 2 and 3 to fully-flatten the fibre.

Start by needling around the outline of a section, then gently fold the fibre ends into the centre of the section to define the shape you want, needling the fibre as you go.

To add more wool, pull off small pieces and place them onto your artwork. Felt them in by needling them until they adhere. You will be building up layers to create depth and texture, highlights and shadows, colour blends and details.

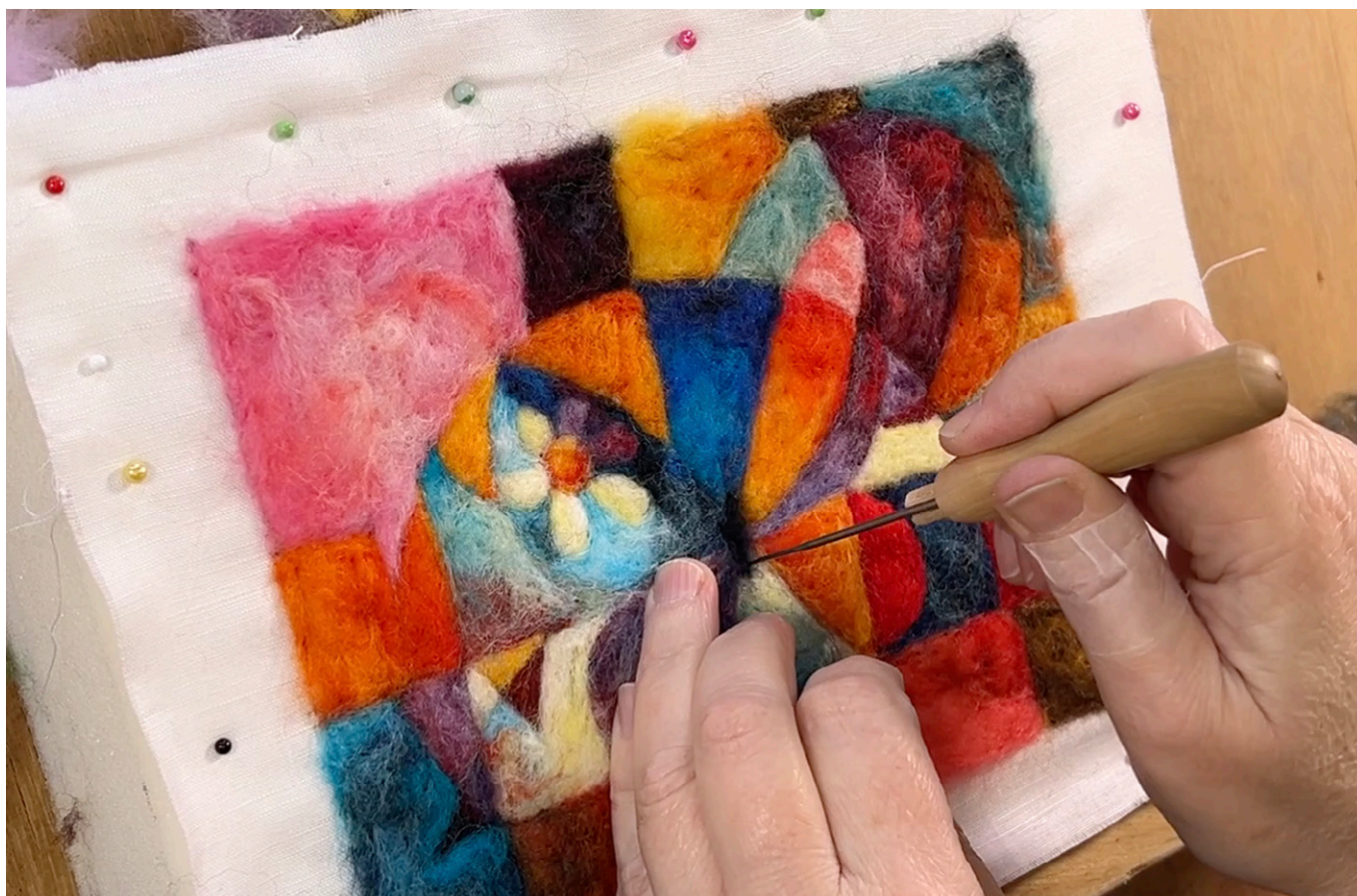
You can mix fibre colours by hand to create custom shades and gradients. Pull small amounts of each colour you wish to blend. Lay the fibres on top of each other and gently pull them apart, then stack the pulled sections back together. Repeat this process several times, pulling and stacking, until the fibres are thoroughly mixed and you achieve the desired

blend. This method ensures a smooth and even colour transition, giving you greater control over the hues in your felted artwork. You can use two small carding brushes to achieve a more blended result. Two metal wire dog brushes will give a similar result.

Once you're satisfied with the overall look, give the entire piece one final needling pass to ensure everything is secure and smooth. Poke any loose fibres in with your needle. Use scissors only if absolutely necessary, as they create a blunt edge on the fibre which can be difficult to felt into your artwork.

Tips for Success:

- Be patient and take your time. Felting is a slow process.
- Start by felting simple shapes to build your skills and confidence.
- Try using different gauge needles until you find the needle size that works well for you.
- Try using different needle handles to find the most comfortable one for you. Needle-felting tools usually hold from one to five needles, allowing you to speed up the felting-process or work on detailed areas.



2 | LAYER 1



- Needle-felt the sections of the pattern to match the colour sample supplied. You can start anywhere.
 - Take a very small amount of fibre, pull the fibre apart repeatedly with your finger tips to rough it up, then start to fill in each section on the pattern.
 - Roughly outline a section by needling the fibre, then gently fold the fibre back over, into the section, and needle-felt in the ends to tidy them up.
 - If you have too much fibre for a section, hold your work down with one finger and pull the excess fibre away with your other hand, then felt in the leftover wisps (you should never need to cut your fibre with scissors using this method). It's better to work in thin layers than to try to felt too much fibre at one time.
 - Avoid using black as a solid colour (as it's too dominant); instead, black has been supplied to mix with other colours to create shades (see *Colour Theory Tips* section).
 - The pattern sections are rarely solid blocks of colour. Each section should show a mix of colours. Layer 1 is a great time to experiment with your colour blends. If you don't like what you see, you can always cover over the fibre on Layers 2 and 3.
 - This artwork is created in three layers. You can choose to lay blocks of colour for Layer 1, then overlay additional colours in Layers 2 and 3. However, you'll find you get much richer colours if you start to blend your colours from Layer 1.
 - Use very small amounts of two or three colours and mix them using a carding brush or your finger tips. The more you pull the colours the more they will mix.
 - Continue laying down colour until you have covered the whole image up to the dotted lines.
- Tip: To create tints (lighter colours) on Layers 1 and 2 mix your colours with the white wool fibre. Leave the white cotton fibre until you do the final highlights on Layer 3. This is because the cotton is thick and opaque (making perfect highlights) whilst the wool is more translucent and easier to needle-felt over the top.*

3 | REMOVE ARTWORK AND RE-PIN



- Unpin your fabric and remove it from the foam after finishing Layer 1 to minimise the foam getting entangled in your artwork.
- Remove all the pins and gently peel the fabric away from the foam base. Start in one corner or along one edge and lift the fabric up, then peel back. You can do this around each of the edges until you finally remove the fabric in the middle of your work.
- Re-pin your work to the foam base as you did initially. You will not need to remove it again until you have finished the artwork completely.

4 | LAYER 2: ADDING EMPHASIS LINES



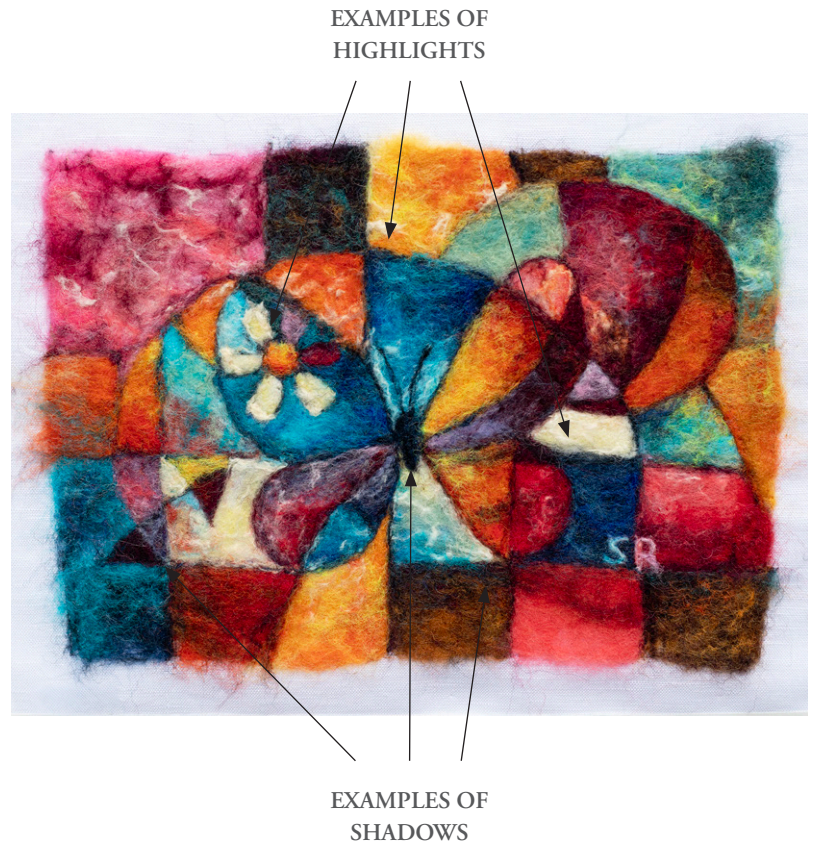
- Add emphasis lines in this layer. Use wispy strands of fibre to create dark lines separating some of the sections, OR you may choose not to add emphasis lines, which then creates a different, more subtle, look.
- It's better to start with fine lines, then build them up with more fibre if you wish to make the lines darker or thicker. Some of your lines will be thin, some will be thick.
- In Layer 3, you will felt over these lines to soften the edges. Don't worry if your lines look stark and too dark on Layer 2, they will disappear slightly on Layer 3!
- Avoid using solid black. Instead use a dark shade of another colour instead. If the supplied fibre colours are not dark enough, then you can blend your chosen colour with a bit of black to achieve the shade you want. The emphasis lines in this pattern are dark blue and dark maroon.
- To create a line: Poke the fibre in at the start of your line. Then, with the needle in the fibre (holding it in place), pull the fibre gently until it is long and thin, then needle-felt it in place.

5 | LAYER 3: COVERING THE EMPHASIS LINES



- The first thing to do on Layer 3 is to cover the emphasis lines from Layer 2. You do this by using a thin quantity of wool fibre to match the section adjacent to the line. By using a wisp of fibre, you will see some of the shadow underneath.
- At the same time you can make colour blending adjustments to enhance or correct what you have done to this point. When it comes to quantity of fibre used on Layer 3, less is more, so that your Layer 1 colours show through. Aim for smooth blends rather than hard lines.
- Multiple layers of little wisps of fibre are better than one heavy application.
- You may feel like you are covering up your Layer 1 work. Sometimes you will want to do that (to change your mind, enhance or correct). Other times you will want to let some of the Layer 1 colours come through to create a rich blend.
- If you chose to blend colours on Layer 1, then your work on Layer 3 will be minimal. If you chose to use block colours on Layer 1, then use Layer 3 to do your blends.
- For your blends on Layer 3, pay close attention to colour theory, particularly complementary and analogous mixes.

6 | LAYER 3: ADDING HIGHLIGHTS AND SHADOWS



- Layer three is the time to add highlights, shadows, work on any last blending details and colour mixes and tidy the blends.
- To create your highlights now is the time to use the white cotton fibre to create your blends.
 - For white highlights, blend the white cotton fibre with white wool fibre (roughly the same quantity of each).
 - For coloured highlights, blend the white cotton fibre with coloured wool. You can adjust the lightness by increasing or decreasing the coloured fibre. See image above left for the highlight colours used in Flutter – pink, purple, white, blue, orange, lilac. The cotton is quite opaque, and the wisps of cotton can add character to the overall effect.
- In this painting, highlights are applied to most of the sections. You can also try felting in fine wisps of colour over the white cotton fibre for a different look.
- Use your dark blue or dark maroon fibre mix (from the Layer 2 emphasis lines) to apply a very fine outline around some of the sections to add some definition.
- Stand back and look objectively at your painting. Are any sections too dark? Too light? Not blended enough? The wrong colour? Do you need more highlights or shadows?
- To finish, needle over the whole image, to felt in any loose ends and to make the painting as flat as possible.
- You should not be able to see any white fabric or pen lines showing through. If you can, cover these areas up with a bit of fibre.

TIP: You are at high risk of breaking a needle on Layer 3 as the fibre is getting thick. Keep your needle as near to upright as possible and go gently over the thicker and cotton fibre areas.

7 | FINISHING YOUR FIBRE PAINTING



- Remove all pins and peel your artwork off the foam block.
- Given the number of layers of fibre, you'll likely find that portions of the foam block have become embedded in the back of your painting. Use a carding brush or metal tooth dog brush to pick/brush the foam out of the fibre (you may have to brush quite hard). You will not damage the front of your work by doing this, however

try to be as careful as possible. If bits of your foam block have come away, then you'll be able to use the other side of the foam block for your next fibre painting.

- Use an iron (on steam setting) directly on the front of your work to pull out all of the needle holes and to enhance the colours. You'll notice that your fibres blend in a whole new way, and your work will take on an oil pastel effect with luscious colour.

FRAMING YOUR PAINTING

- Your artwork measures 7" x 5" (177.8mm x 127mm), fitting an internationally-standard photo frame. Your artwork also has around 12mm of 'bleed'. This bleed area (the space between the solid border line and the dotted line on your pattern) is designed to sit underneath the cardboard mat in your photo frame, allowing for a seamless edge to your framed artwork.
- Use fabric tape or masking tape to carefully tape your work to the back of the cardboard mat that comes with your frame, making your artwork taut but not overstretched.
- If using a store-bought frame you could keep or remove the glass. Standard framing glass is reflective which can make it difficult to see the fibre in your work. However, glass also protects your work from moisture and dust, so here are some options:
 - Retain the glass.
 - Remove the glass completely to prevent static or moisture touching the fibres.



- Use a shadow box frame where the glass is set a distance from the artwork.
- For professional framing, request that the framer uses ultra-clear glass (so you can see the fibres clearly) and offsets the glass (using a 3–5mm spacer) to prevent the glass touching the fibres.

TROUBLESHOOTING

If the wool isn't sticking to the fabric base.	Ensure you are felting on the foam block supplied and applying enough pressure. Try changing needles – there is always a small chance that the needle is a dud. If you are purchasing needle-felting needles yourself, beware that some cheap needles do not work well at all.
If the needle breaks.	Avoid using too much force and always insert the needle straight in and pull it straight out. Needles are fragile and can break if twisted or bent or used on an angle. A needle can also break if you try to push it through a very thick or knotty area of fibre.
If the wool looks uneven.	Keep your felting strokes consistent and work in small sections. Adding thin layers of wool gradually can help achieve a smoother finish.
If the colours are mixing unintentionally.	Work slowly and carefully when adding new colours. Be intentional with the colours you add. Following colour theory will help to control your colour blends.
If the wool is not compacting enough.	The needles with this kit will work well with the wool supplied. However, if you use different needles (or different types of fibre), some needles work better than others. If you work with cheap or inappropriate needles, it can often feel like the needle is sliding through the fibre without catching. That's a good sign to try a different and reputable brand of needle. You should be able to feel the wool fibre becoming firm and dense within a few punches of the needle.
If the needle gets stuck.	Gently wiggle the needle to free it, then check for any tangles or knots in the wool. Avoid pulling too hard, or pulling on an angle, to prevent breaking the needle.
If you make a mistake.	You can either try removing the section of felting you have just done or felt over the section with another colour fibre.

CARE INSTRUCTIONS FOR NEEDLE-FELTED ARTWORK

Keep your needle-felted artwork out of direct sunlight to prevent the colours from fading. Display it in a cool, dry place away from high humidity and temperature fluctuations, which can damage the wool fibres.

Try not to touch your artwork (fingers transfer oils and dirt and rough up the fibres). If you have to dust your artwork use a soft, dry brush or a can of compressed air to gently remove dust and debris. Avoid using water or liquid cleaners, as moisture can cause the wool to felt further or lose its shape and detail.

If you need to store your artwork, place it in a clean, dry container, and cover it with acid-free tissue paper. Avoid storing it in plastic bags, which can trap moisture and lead to mildew or mould.

Wool can attract pests like moths. Use cedar blocks or lavender sachets in the display area or storage space to deter insects without introducing harsh chemicals that could damage the artwork.

The best protection for your artwork is to have it framed professionally behind glass.

Sarah Ritchie

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MAKE



SNAP



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