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# Painting with Wool



**Grade:** 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

**Medium:** Wool Roving

**Learning Objective:** Inspired by artist Melanie Mikecz, students will learn how to safely needle felt wool, “painting with wool” to create a painterly work.

**Author:** Elizabeth Jackson

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## Elements of Art

**Line:** the flat path of a dot through space used by artists to control the viewer’s eye movement; a long narrow mark or stroke made on or in a surface.

**Shape:** a two-dimensional (flat) area enclosed by a line.

**Texture:** the way a work feels when touched or the portrayal of the quality of a surface. Some words to describe texture are: rough, smooth, coarse, soft, gritty, prickly, or slick.

## Principles of Design

**Unity:** a successful combination of the elements of visual arts to create a sense of wholeness and visual completion in an artwork.

## Additional Vocabulary

**Felting:** becoming permanently matted or entangled.

**Illustrator:** a person who draws or creates pictures for magazines, books, advertising or other printed or digital media.

**Wool:** the fine, soft, curly, or wavy hair forming the coat of a sheep, goat, or similar animal which is used to make yarn and cloth.

**Wool Scales:** the exposed edges of the scales pointing towards the tip of a fiber (hair), creating a jagged edge (images below). Fibers cross and slip over one another giving wool the ability to be felted.

## Materials & Supplies

- Black wool roving for outlines, etc. (.3 oz. per student)
- Wool roving (various colors - .5 oz. per student)
- Thick foam base per student 8" x 8"
- Felting needle size 36 (1 per student plus at least 5 extra in total in case of breakage)
- 6"x6" white craft felt (1 per student)
- Clear multipurpose glue
- Black permanent markers
- Painter/masking tape to label student work
- Black card stock or mat board 9"x12"

## Context (History and/or Artists)

Melanie Mikecz is a freelance artist who has worked as an illustrator and designer in Boston, London and California. She currently lives in San Francisco with her husband and two daughters. Melanie specializes in a digital mixed media style.

All of her illustrations are created digitally, and she considers them to be mixed media. She starts with a painting or basic design on paper, scans it and then manipulated it in Photoshop. The final work is a digital file.

Melanie's art is full of bright colors! She uses geometric shapes, patterns, animals & landscapes. and is inspired by artists like Paul Klee & Wassily Kandinsky.

Her clients include: American Greetings, Brooks Running, Chronicle Books, GAP, Hallmark, Land of Nod/Crate & Kids, Minted, Papyrus, Sims Snowboards, Sunglass Hut, Usborne Books and many many more.



## Advanced Preparation

Cut 6"x 6" craft felt for each student.

Print about 30 different black and white animal images by Melanie Mikecz or other animal images that fit within the 6"x 6" size for students to trace.

Find images of wool fiber under a microscope to show students.

## Tips & Tricks

- Divide up different colored wools in bags in bags for each table to share.
- Felting Needle Safety:
  - Needles are fragile and very sharp with small barbs on the edges.
  - Keep your eye on the needle when using
  - Stick the needle in your foam base whenever you are not actively felting
  - When felting the needle should go straight up and down
  - Needles should barely go into the foam. Do not push the needles deep into the foam.
  - Do not walk around with felting needles in you hand
  - For safety reasons, an adult should dispose of felting needles after the lesson.

## Discussion Points

Where did this amazing bag of brightly colored wool come from?

Define Illustrator?

What is a felted textile?

Felting needle safety.

## Reflection Point (Assessment of Learning Objectives)

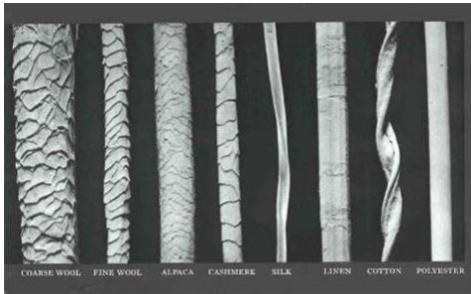
Can the students say?

- I know what it means to be an illustrator.
- I can create my own “painting” with wool using the felting technique.
- I know how to be safe when needle felting.

## Instructions for Lesson

1. Observe images of Melanie Mikecz work and have a conversation. Explain that our project today will be inspired by Melanie Mikecz.
2. Ask questions, define and discuss who/what is a illustrator.
3. Introduce wool roving fiber as a textile to create art.
4. Explain how students will create their own “painting” using felted wool fibers.
5. What is felting? Felting is considered the oldest of all the textile or fiber arts. Show images of wool fiber under microscope showing scales. When your needle goes down and up in the layers of roving it knots these scales together.





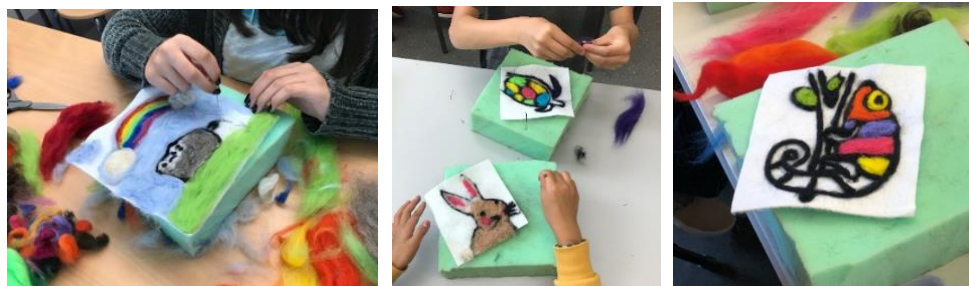
6. Introduce and demonstrate the felting needle and needle safety.
7. Have students choose a animal image, white 6"x6" felt base and permanent black marker.
8. Demonstrate how to trace the animal image onto the felt base, then how to use the felting needle to go over the marker lines needle felting with black wool.



9. After all black lines are felted, students choose wool colors to fill in and around the black lines. The felting should look opaque but not mounded.



10. When work is complete, assist students to glue finished work onto cardstock or matt to create a finished/framed work. Students can sign work on the front or back.



## References

Lesson written by Elizabeth Jackson. Additional resources include <https://www.mm-illustration.com/>;  
<https://www.instagram.com/melaniemikecz/>;  
<https://www.bing.com/images/search?q=simple+animal+line+drawing&FORM=HDRSC2>; before adding color: [https://prezi.com/ayc2ruvpjd\\_g/artist-melanie-mikecz/](https://prezi.com/ayc2ruvpjd_g/artist-melanie-mikecz/);  
<https://paintbrushrocket.blogspot.com/2019/03/6th-grade-needle-felting.html#comment-form>.

### **21<sup>st</sup> Century Thinking Skills**

Observing, cause and effect, creating.

### **WA State Learning Standards**

(VA:Cr2.1.5) a. Experiment and develop skills in multiple art-making techniques and approaches through practice.

(VA:Cr2.2.5) a. Demonstrate quality craftsmanship through care for and use of materials, tools, and equipment.

(VA:Pr5.1.5) a. Develop a logical argument for safe and effective use of materials and techniques for preparing and presenting artwork. Students are responsible for finishing their work in a way that is hangable and viewable.

(VA:Re8.1.5) a. Interpret art by analyzing characteristics of form and structure, contextual information, subject matter, visual elements, and use of media to identify ideas and mood conveyed.

(VA:Cn10.1.5) a. Apply formal and conceptual vocabularies of art and design to view surroundings in new ways through art-making. This can happen with the expansion of students' understanding of wool, where it comes from and how it has been used.