

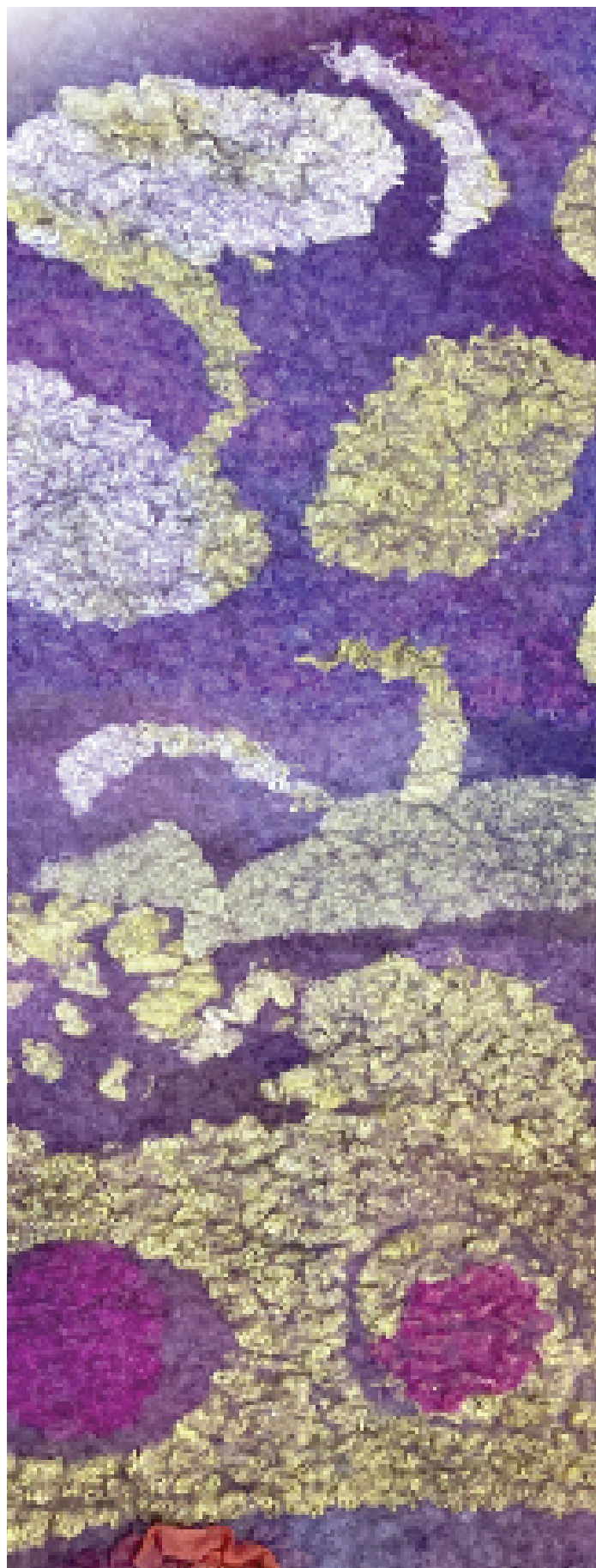
FELT LINES

WINTER 2022

Magazine of the
Victorian Feltmakers Inc.
Reg. No. A0034651T
Issue 96

Featuring Felting in
the Grampians
and
El Kanah felting retreat

detail of vest by Judith Cotterill





Feltlines is the official publication of the Victorian Feltmakers Inc. Please refer any questions/suggestions about the magazine or about content (such as advertising), to the editor at vicfelteditor@gmail.com

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Contributions: We would like to encourage members who are unable to make it to our get-togethers, because of distance or other commitments, to keep in touch with us by sharing stories of their own journey in Feltmaking via Feltlines.

Feltlines provides the perfect opportunity to link members to each other's stories, inspirations and interests. Contact the editor if you have a contribution to make.

Deadline for next issue is October 30th 2022

April's Guest speaker Tina Whitely

My name is Tina Whiteley and I am a textile artist, living and working in Red Hill, on the Mornington Peninsula.

My passion for all things textile flourished and diversified around 15 years ago, while studying textile art and design at Box Hill Tafe. It was there, I discovered the many possibilities of dyeing and printing on fabric. From then on, I knew that I wanted to dye my own fabrics, rather than rely on commercially available ones.

Of all the methods of dyeing, I discovered natural dyeing turned out to be one of my all-time favourites. I was smitten the first moment I unwrapped a cooked bundle of silk and leaves, seeing the beautiful soft orange and red coloured prints. I wanted to learn more about plant dye colours, and experiment with different ways to extract colour from the leaves, flowers, stems, and bark to give a more subtle, earthy, even impressionistic quality, to my dyed fabrics and fibres.

I find experimenting or "playing", really is a fun way of learning and problem solving. More recently I've been exploring the design possibilities of plants, in conjunction with other textile art media, to create 2- and 3-dimensional stitched works on plant-dyed paper, including cards, hand-made journals and boxes.

My experiments with natural dyes, always influence or inform my final textile pieces. I believe they often lead to many happy accidental discoveries, as your mind is open and you are receptive to everything. It can often avoid a lot of possible costly mistakes

by Carole Dellar

We were lucky enough at our last meeting to have as a Guest speaker, Tina Whiteley from Kurrara Designs, in Red Hill, where she works at Eco dyeing. I first met Tina at two demonstrations she held at Cranbourne Botanical Gardens, I found them so inspiring (this was quite a while ago), but I have been following her web site since then.

Remembering this, I thought our members would like to see what she does, and I was certainly right, apart from being such a lovely person. Tina was so interesting, and so

on the final project, if you've already worked out your concept, design and technique beforehand. Experimenting and sampling first, can then give way to enjoying the creative or making process, without those left and right brain battles! I also believe working with your own dyed fabrics and fibres, really helps to cement your unique artistic style.

Over the years, I have naturally dyed a range of silk scarves, cotton quilts, homewares and mixed fibres, which I've sold and exhibited in shops, galleries and art shows, in and around the Peninsula. I have enjoyed giving demonstrations and writing articles on the subject, and prior to Covid, I held regular 2-day weekend workshops, where I taught students the artistry, as well as the science, behind creating colourful textile designs with plant dyes.

I am now exploring teaching opportunities online, as I believe it is a more efficient way of sharing my work, and inspiring others to find the joy in nature, and use it in their own artwork.

To see more of Tina's work please visit: www.kurraradesigns.com.au



accommodating with her advice. Tina's work is wonderful. Her display really helped us understand, a lot of how we can get different colours, by leaving our pieces in the pot, for different lengths of time, and how to make use of different fabrics and flora.

I was lucky enough to find Tina works at the same Op Shop as I do. I will pass on our thanks again, when I see her.

Now to the future, we have some really great guest speakers, so don't miss a meeting to catch up with them.

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From the President's Pen by Andrea Taylor

FELTLINES



Exciting times are ahead in 2022 for the VFI after such a long time in hibernation.

From July we will be promoting the VFI to a wider audience in the hope of

attracting more members and growing the interest in felting.

July sees us at Showcase Quilt show, at the Exhibition centre in Melbourne, sharing our love of felting, in an artisans information booth.

In September we will be major sponsors of Feltmakers categories, in the Craft Pavilion, at the Royal Melbourne Show.

November will finally be our face to face exhibition, titled "Seasons" at Oakhill Gallery in Mornington.

A very busy time for your committee, as you would imagine. If you would like to be involved as a volunteer in these

activities, don't hesitate to contact our committee.

In the meantime, we have an impressive array of speakers to entertain you all, at our meetings. Check out the article on these talented artists in this edition of Feltlines .

Until next time, keep well and felting.



VFI Meetings - Visitors and Speakers 2022

As we finally are able to meet and enjoy each other's company, I also started the search to invite interesting speakers, to share their artistic textile journey, at our meetings.

This year, I was particularly interested in finding speakers, who included recycled and reclaimed textiles in their practice. Though not completely felting oriented, I was able to find speakers, who fitted this bill, and are inspiring and creative in their approach. I hope you will enjoy their visits, and find them as inspiring as I have.

We are always on the lookout for Speakers for our meetings, and if you know anyone you think we should contact, please drop us a email.

More information and links to our speakers can be found at our website.

June:

Nicole Kemp, textile artist

I have known Nicole for some years, and during lockdown, I enjoyed watching the visual journey of her stitching practice on social media.

Using reclaimed textiles and threads and her individual bright style, she creates textile art, which can be controversial, confronts, and above all encourages conversation.

I am excited to welcome Nicole to the Feltmakers in June, to share her textile journey with us all.

August:

Kerrie Hollingsworth, Antiquate Artistry

Kerrie is well known to some of our members, who attended a retreat in Marysville before Covid19. We experienced first hand, her original style and creative work practice in upholstery, reimagining and saving old furniture Giving furniture a new life, and embracing the natural world of fibre and foliage, Kerrie will inspire us with her imagination and personal eclectic style.

October:

Cathy Tobin, Gypsy Weaver

Unexpectedly, Castlemaine monthly market, is where I found the wonderful

Cathy, who along with her husband, creates beautiful Saori woven garments and toys, using recycled and reclaimed textiles. Expect a meeting of weaving demonstrations, and sharing their love of creating, from a diverse range of textiles, proving nothing needs to be wasted or discarded.

Cathy will also bring a range of textile goodies for sale on the day.

A truly inspiring visit to look forward to.

December:

Tanja Gawin

We will welcome one of our own members Tanja, at our final meeting in 2022, which also will be our Christmas meeting.

We look forward to experiencing glorious colors and wild imaginative felt creations, from Tanja, which should encourage us to look outside the box, in our own felting journey.

A great finish to our year.

Felt Frenzies by Margot Ling

How wonderful it has been this year, not to be operating under Covid restrictions, though we know it IS still out there. We still take precautions with distancing and hygiene practises.

Our gatherings over January, March and May, have seen a fairly regular group, who really enjoy coming together to felt.

Our felting space has plenty of light to work in and the opportunity to be mentored and gain confidence. If you are a beginner, you will be working in a non-competitive environment, along with experienced felters, who are happy to share new tricks and techniques with everyone.

In most cases, the Felt Frenzy day gives the felter the opportunity to lay out

and embellish their chosen design, with a view to taking it home to finish, and then bringing it along to the Show and Tell segment, of our regular meetings. However, it is also possible, to come along and simply observe or make samples/prefelts, to be used in a future project.

Whatever your level of felting, all are welcome to come and use the day to bounce off one another.

Being in a group, gives the opportunity to hear what is going on in the world of felt, outside the VFI.

Come and share the camaraderie with likeminded folk, who are also keen to explore their creativity.



El Kanah by Margot Ling

After two years of cancellations, due to Covid, and though there is still much of it about in our community, 13 ladies, all fully vaccinated, joined the retreat in May.

Seven of the ladies were returning participants, and five of the ladies were new to the VFI retreat.

The facility provided us with a beautiful room in which to felt. It had the most glorious views of the bushland, particularly at this time of the year, with the trees all in Autumnal tones.

We were accommodated in very comfortable bedrooms, and enjoyed very generous and delicious meals, three times a day, in a separate dining room.

A visit and 'Artist Talk' with Lynne Stone at the Marysville Gallery, was a great treat for us.

Lynne was exhibiting her exquisite native flora, created with textile, wire, and threads, adapting everyday tools to help her create her unique work.

See the article written by Carole Scholes (one of this year's participants).

The sharing of skills, is such a generous and wonderful contribution to this weekend, and this year was no exception. We all gained much from the knowledge and ideas shared, and I do feel this is the real beauty of a group, who have a passion for felting and are prepared to share.

Each year we have a theme for our cocktail evening, and this year it was

"Shades of Blue". It's always a buzz seeing the interpretations and the variations created around a theme.

Below are a few comments from our participants of 2022.

"Such a wonderful break away, with likeminded people after 3 years, that made it all the more memorable, and such stylish Ladies in Blue. Loved the friendship and the sharing."

"Thanks everyone for a wonderful weekend. It was great, and as a relatively new member, I found so many friendships and mentors."

"Great fun and lovely friendship, special memories and felt making reinvigorated."



Lynne Stone by Carole Scholes

During our very successful felting retreat at El Kanah in Marysville, a trip to visit botanical artist, Lynne Stone was organised. Lynne was hosting an exhibition of her work, in the gallery at the Tourist Information building, in the town. We visited her there, in order to see the display of beautiful art forms of gum and wattle blossoms, displayed in spacious surrounds.

We sat closely around her table, and Lynne talked to us about her life experiences, and explained her work, and how it all evolved.

Lynne started travelling prior to the devastating Marysville fires, driving an old bus around Australia, and exploring the many beautiful displays of native flora. Lynne told us she is not a painting and drawing type of botanical artist, and set about making representations of our beautiful native flora using wire, threads, a sewing machine, puff paint and soluble fabric. Lynne worked on the technique, until she perfected it so well, that it is difficult to look at these works of art, and realise that they are not the real thing.

The fires in Marysville destroyed her house and possessions, but Lynne was able to rescue some items before her escape. Her old bus was destroyed in the inferno. She has

now replaced it with a modern, fuel-efficient campervan.

Lynne sources special nickel chromium electrical wire, due to its non-tarnish, non-rusting properties. She uses a battery powered drill, to twist her wires and form some of her blooms. The fibres are mostly dyed by Lynne, to obtain the exact colours representative of the blooms. Puff paint is used for the stamens, to give the effect of pollen grains. An industrial embroidery machine is her main tool. Lynne was a software programmer, and can individually write the software for her industrial embroidery machines, to produce exactly the forms she needs, for this artwork. Fly fishing tools used by flymakers, are also essential tools of trade for Lynne, to aid in holding thread and wires, whilst wrapping the stems.

Several months ago, Lynne featured on Gardening Australia, with an article about her work. This can be downloaded using ABC **iview**, and makes interesting watching, for those people, who were unable to attend the excellent afternoon with Lynne.

Lynne had set up a demonstration for us, and explained in great detail, how she created her art forms.

After the Gardening Australia episode, Lynne was inundated with requests

to purchase her work, and most of her pieces were sold. The majority of Lynne's work is now destined for galleries and museums, preserving her artwork for all to see.

We were all in awe of this interesting, and very talented lady.

Thank you Lynne, for a most welcoming and informative afternoon. We learned so much!

We have 2 copies of Lynne's book in our library, and the book makes very interesting and educational reading, especially for those members unable to meet her in person.



Grampians Texture 2022

Pam Hovel 2 Day workshop by Moira G. Simpson

Having trained in sculpture and ceramics at art school, and now a keen felter, I was looking forward to Pam Hovel's felted vessels workshop, as a way of merging these interests. Over two days, we learned two basic methods of felting vessels, using circular and profile resists, and various forms of embellishments. First, we watched a demo by Pam on how to create a small round vessel, with simple applied decoration using silk scraps or wool tops, then we each made our own. We used strong felt batts - Corriedale, Finn, or Merino - all around 28-30 microns. Using batts, proved to be a much faster method of laying out than using tops.

Next, Pam demonstrated using a profile resist and we developed individual plans, measuring the vases that we had brought as moulds, calculating the sizes of our resists, to allow for the 3D form and shrinkage, and employing our chosen method of embellishment. Pam

had brought along several of her vessels plus a selection of samples, illustrating a variety of textural treatments. She works mainly with undyed wool, and her examples included beautiful gradations of tone in white, off-white, greys and browns, which allowed the textural embellishments to shine. Her enticing examples whetted our appetites and we proved to be a voracious audience, watching as Pam demonstrated two or three techniques, and then – at our urging – demonstrating them all! Then we set to work: we laid out fibres, wetted, flipped, laid out again, until we had built up the requisite number of layers, on each side of the resist. We then used our chosen method of embellishment – scrunching, stitching, gathering, making balls, cutting, etc. – then rubbed and rolled, until our vessels took shape, and could be slipped onto the moulds for the final shrinking to size.

Pam was a patient and generous tutor, who shared her knowledge freely and assisted each participant to create a beautiful vessel. The finished works showed a remarkable array of sizes, shapes, colours and textures. We began the workshop examining Pam's samples, in wondrous admiration, and completed it with an understanding of how each was made. Now we can embark upon further skill development, in our own studios, as we continue to explore the various techniques, and the exciting potential of using wool to make felted vessels.



Pam Hovel 4 day workshop Organic forms in Felt by Lyndon Regan

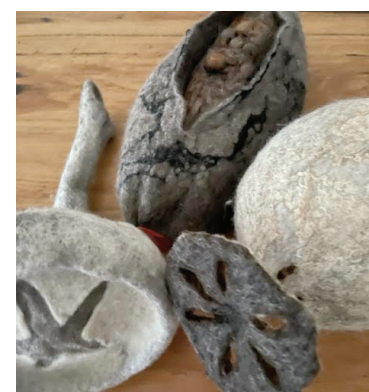
It was so exciting to return to Halls Gap. It is such a beautiful part of the world. During Grampians Texture, it is filled with many friendly and like-minded people. We stay an extra few days, so that we have time to relax. This year I opted for a 4 day course with Pam Hovel and was so glad of my choice. I haven't felted much for the last year, but this workshop has really inspired and motivated me, to move in a different direction in felt.

We used Finn and Corriedale batts in natural colours, to create 3D seed pods. Pam had many beautiful examples and we all started by making a gum nut, to learn the basic technique. We used foam underlay for our resists, with 4 layers of fibre. There was some cutting and stitching, burning of edges and embellishment with other fibres. There was rubbing, but no rolling.

Over the 4 days, most of us completed 3 pieces. They were variations of

Pam's samples or new creations of the students.

Pam is a very well organised, knowledgeable and supportive teacher. She is very encouraging. We were shown how to design and document our process individually, and techniques were demonstrated to the class. Everyone was very happy with their felted pieces. A huge thank you to Pam



SpringDale Felt & Textile Artists

We are based in Drysdale, on the Bellarine Peninsula, Victoria. We have been together as a felt group for 8 years, and have been slowly growing and expanding to other textile formats, while felting is our preferred format. We meet on the 1st Saturday of the month 10am to 3pm. We felt all day, show newbies how it's done, and have

workshops and demonstrations when needed.

We are having a FELTABULOUS exhibition on the Queens Birthday weekend Saturday 12th and Sunday 13th of June, at SpringDale Neighbourhood Centre, High St. Drysdale. Any enquiries to Julie Drobek 0409368290.

Yarra Valley Felters Pod

The felters pod in the Yarra Valley is moving slowly but still being attended by those who are able to escape the Covid or Flu. If you are interested in attending contact Caz Rogers. ripplesonthepond1957@gmail.com

Pam de Groot 4 day workshop by Pam Fyfe

In March, I was fortunate enough to join eleven others in a four-day felting workshop at Halls Gap, with Pam de Groot. They were four busy days from 9.00 am to 4.00 pm, and usually extended to 5.00 pm.

The workshop focused on design decoration on a vest. Pam started us off with a 10x10cm square, to establish the shrinkage rate which would, along with bust and length measurements, transfer to the size of the pattern/template each person would use. This was crucial to the size of the finished product.

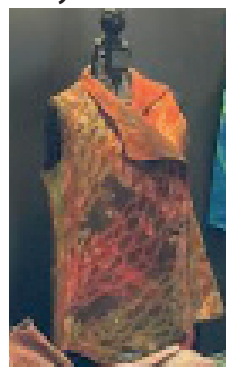
We laid out the vest in one piece using a resist, allowing for an overlap piece in the front. Decisions had to be made about the inside design, very early in the process. Lots of thin plastic kept the wet wool in place on each side. Once fully laid out, the next important phase was the design and decoration, using mainly contrasting tissue silk.

Participants used various pieces of silk, different colours, some with patterns or designs, and different weights, for

example Tissue and Paj silk, to create their individual design. As usual, when felters get together, each of the vests produced was unique.

This was particularly challenging to me, as it was not an area I had experienced before. I usually use the colours in the wool for my "decoration". Pam and the other participants were only too happy to share ideas and materials to assist, both the new and more experienced felters, so any problems were able to be sorted out.

The results were unique and interesting, reflecting each participant's experience and individual creativity. Although I had to complete my vest at home, I am pleased with the result. I have learned aspects of design and decoration, that I did not know before, and this was the purpose of the workshop. I hope to make another vest, to use the skills and knowledge I acquired at the workshop, and I am sure I will use them in other projects as well.



Pam Fyfe



From Front Cover
Judith Cotterill



Detail

Sabrina Crosthwaite

Catherine O'Leary 6 day workshop by Della Jones

Meditative Stitch Garment class.

Six uninterrupted days creating a felted garment, under the expert tutelage of Catherine O'Leary – felting experiences don't get much better than this!

Catherine O'Leary is the most generous of teachers, freely sharing the bounty of her knowledge, built upon her decades of work, investigation and thought – all underpinned by her amazing artistry and creativity. She also has the rare and wonderful ability to create a sea of calm all about her, which for me was the perfect atmosphere, in which to build my own perfect storm of creativity.

So many options and possibilities were opened to us on the first day, from the choice of garment form, to style, pattern, approach, detail and finish. In this sense it was a true Masterclass,

allowing and empowering each participant, to make their own choices. Despite my many years of experience in making felted garments, I was initially not quite sure which way to go, needing to take time, to embrace the fact that so many innovative pathways, were possible. All of us, however, were able to work out a starting point, which was not so rigid, as to preclude later directional changes, as we eased into the work and moved up a few gears. Catherine was very busy and supportive during this process, quietly making sure that every student was systematically checked on, responding to individual needs in a class of varied experience, and guiding all of us, unhurriedly, through the process of getting our ideas to coalesce and develop, into a one-of-a-kind garment. By the morning of Day 3, Catherine

commented to me that she could feel that the classroom vibe had changed. There was almost a hum in the air, as everyone had found their feet, and were tasting the joys of their own creation.

I was personally blown away, by the opportunity to experiment with Catherine's liberating design techniques. I have often lacked confidence in my ability to create interesting surface design, but Catherine's approach to design layout, was game changing for me. I learned that the pattern didn't have to be pre-planned; it would in fact emerge, butterfly-like, from the straightforward process of laying out and cutting. The magic occurred without conscious decision-making. It was a coming-together of the happy accidents, that piled up when I relaxed, into the process, and let the work take over from my often-obsessive need, to control the placement of the pattern and the outcome. Cutting through precious layers of prefelts, and placing them all in intuitive positions on the background, then placing the pattern over the top and cutting the garment pieces, was the technique, that unleashed the hitherto hidden power, of my own project. Truly serendipitous! Relax and enjoy the work, were the key take aways for me!

As a class, the approaches were many and varied. Some students were rolling felt on the first day, some not until the 6th day – this had nothing to do with the speed of work, but rather different

Continued over page



Continued

methods, of assembling a felted garment. Embellishment with hand stitching was a feature of this class, and students varied greatly with regard to the amount of stitching they used, and to the stage at which they added it – pre-felt, semi-felted or fully felted. The colour palettes were varied too, of course, as in most felting workshops. They ranged from subdued harmonies, to the dizzying ‘box of coloured crayons’

approach. Surrounding me were the deep reds and golds of tapestries, riots of analogous hues – pinks, reds, purples, magentas, colours of the Kimberley, earth’s pastels suggestive of watercolour landscape paintings, vivid brights that nod to the psychedelic 60’s. Colour palettes were as varied as the personalities of the group of felters, who had been gathered together for a marvelous 6-day journey.

Finally, I need to say that it takes a village to raise a jacket. Felting/crafting alone may suit some people, but I miss the encouragement and input from others, that a workshop is able to offer. I was fortunate in this class, to be working close to some wonderfully warm and helpful people, who made the class extra-special.

Our Biennial Exhibition

Keep Sunday 6th November free for official opening 2.00 - 4.00 pm

Expressions of interest will need to be emailed to Sabrina Crosthwaite by

August 20th. The form for this is on our Web Site. Print this out & fill it in.

Take a photo of it and send it to Sabrina. vicfeltditor@gmail.com

You will need to arrange for your work to be delivered, with the second form for Oakhill Gallery, to either our October meeting, or to Sabrina’s place in Balwyn or Carole Dellar on the Mornington Peninsula. Email Sabrina for directions.

Obituary

VALE Suzanne Kleefman

Suzanne was a regular participant at our retreats over a great many years. She came down from Wodonga, along with a group of like-minded felters, from the northern areas of Victoria. Suzanne was an enthusiastic contributor to the camaraderie, over these weekends, which were held at Camp Jungai, then later at El Kanah in Marysville, and was always good company. Not only did she have a great sense of humour, she was always creative and productive on these retreats.

Suzanne was diagnosed with a brain tumour last November, and sadly passed away in March this year.

Suzanne will be missed at our retreats as, I’m sure, with her felting community. Our condolences go to her family, friends and felting community in their loss.

Nicola Brown On Line Felt and Eco Printing by Lyndon Regan

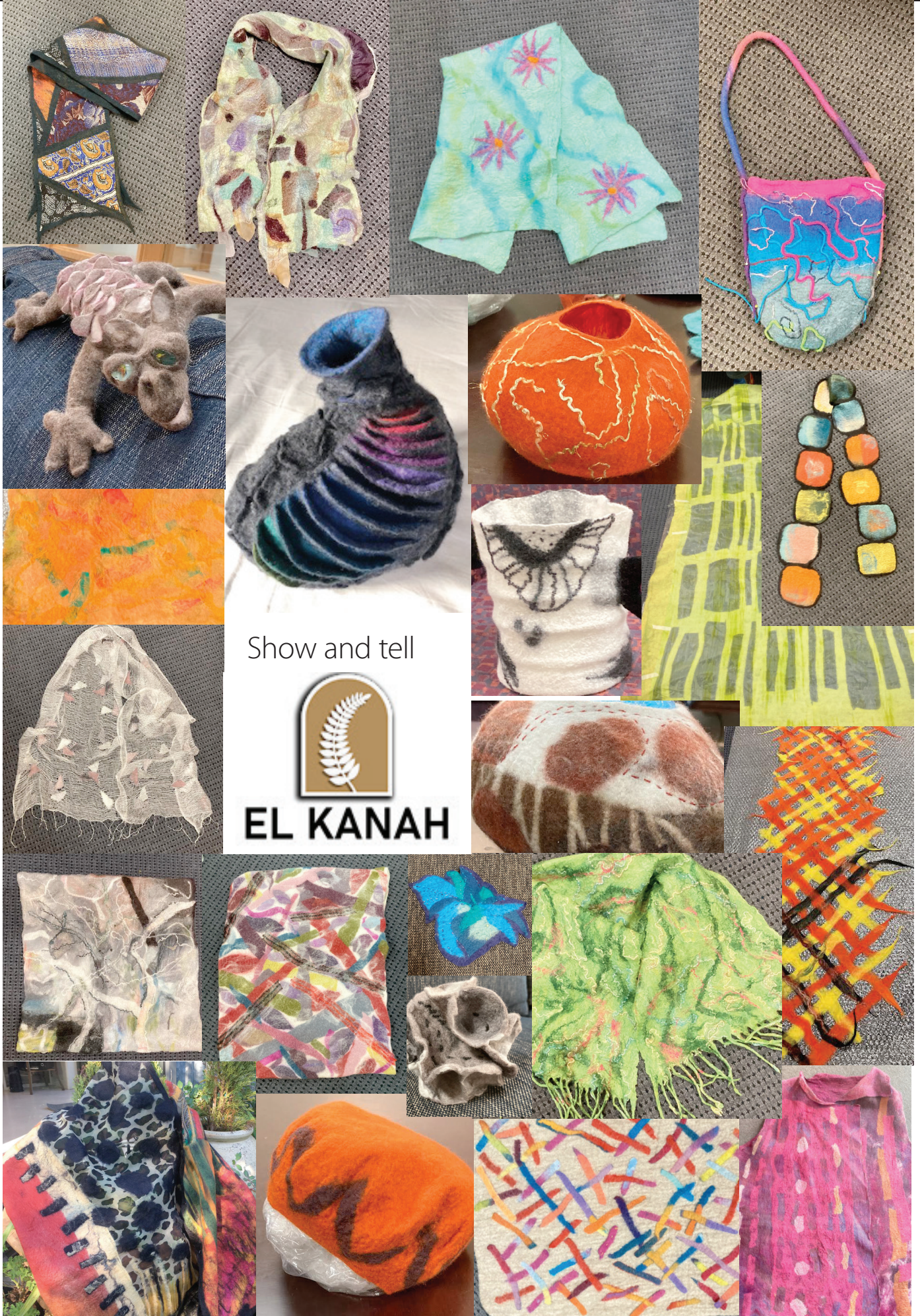
Last year I participated in an online Felt and EcoPrint class with Nicola Brown. I did a live workshop with Nicola at TAFTA at Geelong in 2017, and really learnt so much from her. Nicola is a very methodical and explicit teacher. She is an experienced felter, who eco prints without chemical mordants.

We created our felt items and then eco printed with local leaves, mainly eucalypts. We used vinegar and rusty items with leaves, to achieve our prints on felted items. I felted a wrap and a pod with merino wool.

As part of the course, we joined a private Facebook group, so that we could share our work and receive feedback. Nicola was quick to answer questions and gave very individual

feedback. I will happily take part in more of Nicola’s workshops, as she continues to offer new skills and ideas for felt and eco printing.





Show and tell



EL KANA H