

Rendezvous at a windy corner / Johannes-Harm Hovinga

#studyandexperiment

Wool,

The beauty of raw wool lies in its simplicity and authenticity, and it reminds us of the importance of sustainable and environmentally-friendly materials. As we strive to reduce our impact on the planet, raw wool is a stunning reminder of the beauty that can be found in natural and sustainable materials.

Wool, with its unique properties, lends itself to various applications like clothing, beyond clothing, wool is also used extensively in interior design as an element of comfort to any space.



Experimenting:

Like everything it starts with understanding, understanding its composition and structure.

Wool is a protein fiber made of keratin, the same material found in human hair and nails. The fiber has a scaly outer layer and a fibrous inner core, which gives it its unique properties of insulation, elasticity, and water resistance.

Experimenting with wool opens up a world of creative possibilities. One of the most popular techniques is felting, which involves matting and pressing wool fibers together to create a solid piece of fabric. Wet felting and needle felting are two common methods used to manipulate wool into various shapes, from flat surfaces to intricate three-dimensional sculptures.

Dyeing wool is another avenue for experimentation, as it allows you to explore a wide range of colours and create unique colour palettes. Natural dyes extracted from plants, roots, and flowers can produce soft and earthy tones, while synthetic dyes offer a vibrant spectrum of hues. With different dyeing techniques like dip-dyeing, tie-dyeing, and ombré effects, wool can be transformed into a canvas for imaginative expression.

In addition to felting and dyeing, knitting and crocheting, wool offer endless opportunities for experimentation.

Sustainability and Ethical Considerations:

Beyond its artistic potential, experimenting with wool aligns with sustainable and ethical practices. Wool is a renewable resource, as sheep produce a new fleece each year. It is also biodegradable, making it an environmentally friendly choice compared to synthetic fibers.

Moreover, wool can be sourced from farms that prioritize animal welfare, ensuring that sheep are treated ethically and their well-being is respected.

Its sustainability and ethical considerations make it an attractive choice for those seeking environmentally friendly materials.



The wool I use to work with is from the rare Schoonebeker sheep and the indigenous Drents heath sheep. (Drenthe is the province in the north east of the Netherlands where I grew up, what I always call home.)

I work with a local shepherd who uses his flock of sheep for sustainable and ecological management of the peat landscape.

The sheep's grazing behavior helps maintain the balance of the delicate heathland ecosystem. By selectively grazing on certain plants and shrubs, they prevent the dominance of fast-growing species, allowing a diverse range of plants and wildlife to thrive. This ecological approach ensures the preservation of the unique flora and fauna of Drenthe's heathlands, contributing to the conservation of biodiversity and the overall health of the ecosystem.

The fibers of raw wool are soft and warm, creating a tactile sensation that is hard to match with other materials. Sheep are often reared on pasture lands, which imbue the wool with the essence of the environment where they are raised.

Wool reflects the landscape, climate, and soil, creating a unique and diverse range of textures and colors. This connection to nature and the farming community is an essential part of the beauty of raw wool, and it gives the material a sense of authenticity and integrity.