



Made in Cornwall

FELTIE FRIENDS BY STARGAZEY CRAFTS

Words by **Jula de Buhr**



ABOVE: MARION CARBIS

Needle felting is the art of sculpting fibre into shapes, using a special barbed needle and your own two hands. So how does that fluff turn into amazing creations? Here's the science: it's all to do with microscopic scales on the wool fibres that catch and lock together when agitated, creating a dense, matted felt that can be used to form sculptural shapes. "With a lot of stabbing and layering, you can create pretty much anything," says Marion Carbis of Stargazey Crafts.

It was during the cold, dark winter hours of 2013 that Marion resolved to act upon her curiosity for needle felting, taking her first steps with the help of YouTube. "I very quickly became addicted, as wool is such a tactile material to work with – quite magical," she enthuses. "As such, I exhausted all my friends and family with felted gifts."

With spring approaching, Marion extended her winter hobby to all seasons and places: in her studio, in front of the TV, even on view at the fairs where she sold the finished product. Following a great reception at one of these fairs, Marion launched Stargazey Crafts. "I retired from the NHS in May 2018 after working for the Cornwall Stroke Service, but still need to earn," she explains. "Stargazey Crafts was a

natural progression into a fulfilling occupation that combined the necessary with the therapeutic and the enjoyable."

Needle felting allows you to create nearly anything you can picture in your mind. At the same time, the exercise helps to improve cognitive function and mood. Marion suffers from tinnitus caused by an industrial accident; "Busying myself with something enjoyable and absorbing not only helps me to forget about my tinnitus, but also helps to balance the mood-affecting chemicals produced in the brain."

When Marion made her first felties, she had no idea she would create hundreds of the beautiful creatures, with her favourite usually being her latest. "At the moment, it's an octopus, but hares have a special place in my heart," she says.

Her local land and seascapes – particularly Godrevy, just around the corner from her home near Hayle – have always served as an inspiration to her, leading to a host of sea-related creations from starfish to seals, pebbles and shells. "You can't help be inspired living in Cornwall; the natural world has always held my interest."

By not sticking to any patterns and using wool from various breeds of sheep, Marion ensures each little feltie becomes one of a kind, with an individual character and personality, designed with love and a little humour. She also offers workshops and bespoke commissions: a blue lobster to accompany a 'lobster adoption' for someone's mother-in-law, a zebra for a rugby-playing son in South Africa and a wedding cake topper for a couple who love swallows.

Marion runs popular workshops at the Hall for Gwinear near Hayle, teaching the basics about equipment and how to create a 3D shape, adding parts, colour and personality – with the added benefit of friendship, support and cake! Places are limited to 10 per session so booking is essential. 

For further information, including Christmas fair and workshop dates, visit www.stargazeycrafts.co.uk

Stargazey Crafts is a member of the Made In Cornwall approved origin scheme operated by the Trading Standards services of Cornwall Council. For further information, visit www.madeincornwall.com

