

Artist Gail Barnikol...

Art has always been woven into my life—quite literally from the very beginning. As a child, I loved seeing doll clothes, drawn early to the textures of fiber and fabric. That love only deepened over time. In junior high, an inspiring teacher encouraged us to pursue “real art,” opening my eyes to creativity as both expression and discipline. By high school, I was exploring pottery, painting, and a range of traditional art forms.

In college, my focus returned to fiber arts, where I studied jewelry making, clothing construction, tailoring, and pattern design. After marrying, I poured that knowledge into my home, creating everything from curtains and rugs to pillows—filling everyday life with handmade beauty. When I became a mother, my creativity expanded even further as I made clothes, toys, and quilts for my children.

Teaching became another meaningful chapter in my journey. As a home economics teacher, I shared skills in sewing and cooking, always viewing food itself as a form of art.

In retirement, my artistic path has continued to evolve. I began repurposing wool sweaters into hats, mittens, fingerless gloves, and purses, giving new life to old materials. That led me to spinning my own yarn, which in turn inspired me to take up weaving. Each new skill has opened the door to another, allowing my creativity to grow in unexpected ways.

For 15 years, I helped run the Art Bazaar, a space dedicated to supporting local artists and sharing handmade work with the community. I remain an active member of my art club.

Above all, I love sharing what I’ve learned. Whether it’s needle felting or another craft, teaching others to create brings me as much joy as making things myself. For me, art is not just something I do—it’s how I live, connect, and continue to grow.