



Jo-Anne Barr

FIBRE ARTIST, FELTER, HATMAKER

Jo Barr from JAMB Hats is a Textile Artist who creates unique 3D wool felt sculptures in the form of felt hats. She is a passionate fibre addict and felt-fanatic. Jo creates hats that are handcrafted from Australian wool fibres in her on-farm studio in rural NSW. Unlike other hat makers Jo creates her own felt and then sculpts and shapes the felt into unique one-off design hats in a range of styles. Jo enjoys designing and creating hats that are unique, vibrant, comfortable and practical whilst expressing the personality of the wearer and making them feel stylish and confident.

Jo's background and education has been firmly embedded in Australian Textiles. She learned to sew and create clothing at a very young age, has pursued many textile-based arts in her life and studied Applied Science specialising in Textiles and worked in textiles manufacturing. She has also studied education and agriculture and has worked as a teacher and a university lecturer. Moving to rural NSW 20 years ago Jo became a farmer and developed a passion for Australian agricultural.

Having undertaken a hat making course over 20 years ago Jo became fascinated with millinery. Utilising pre-made felt shapes that were manufactured overseas using fibres from unknown sources never sat well with Jo. Mastering the art of creating her own sustainable felt from Australian wool fibres became a priority. In 2017 Jo learnt how to make a basic wet felt beanie style hat and was hooked on the process. Combining the art of creating felt from wool fibres with millinery techniques Jo has mastered the art of creating beautiful, handmade felt that she sculpts and blocks into stylish hats for men and women incorporating uniquely Australian animal protein fibres.

Jo's is continually seeking opportunities to learn new techniques from other felt artists and hat makers from around the world. Jo believes that there always opportunities to learn from others and to improve her own practice and takes inspiration from the amazing protein fibres produced in Australia.

Being a qualified teacher and passionate about her artistic practices Jo enjoys sharing her passion and skills with others and conducts a variety of wet felting classes in hats, flowers and felt pictures, teaching both children and adults from all walks of life. Jo has run workshops for community groups, school groups (primary and high school), Local Government, Arts North West, Rural Advisory Mental Health Program, Art Galleries, CWA groups, Retail Outlets, fibre festivals, local libraries and small art-based businesses, she has demonstrated at Tamworth Country Music Festival and been guest exhibitor in Art galleries, Art shows and Artisan events.

I have always had an affinity for textiles for as long as I can remember and have dabbled in different creative endeavors in that space and have fallen in love with making hand felted wool hats from Australian fibres.

I never tire of the magical feeling created when I start with a handful of beautiful wool fibres and through manipulating those fibres using my hands, a bit of water and soap, I can create a strong, sustainable, mouldable fabric, known as felt, the oldest known form of textiles that is intertwined into the development of human societies and then sculpt this fabric into beautiful 3D hats.

Jo