

PROFILE

ANDREA NOESKE-PORADA

FELT FOLDINGS AND THE ART OF SYMBOLISM



Phacelia I, 2015. Photo: Erika Glanzer

A maker of sculptural works in felt, Andrea Noeske-Porada is inspired by architectural and natural constructions, and the concept of minimalism. Her work is renowned for its angular geometric forms, rather than the softer, rounded qualities frequently seen in handmade felt. Based in Germany, Andrea began making felt in 2002 using small felted balls instead of

precious stones for inclusion in her silversmith work. This was followed by exploring felt's potential for larger 3D works not easily achieved in precious metals. Her interest in abstract, form-based art eventually led her to develop Felt Foldings, a unique technique to create a relief of repeating, 3D spatial structures and striking sculptural forms in handmade felt.



Relief-Inside is
Outside, 2010.
Photo: Kyra Porada



Homage to Op Art (front), 2014. Photo: Erika Glanzer

Andrea says, 'I call myself a 3D artist with preferences for textiles and fibres. I liken the making of felt to creating constructions with fibre; 3D forms that emerge from a relatively thin and flat piece of felt during the process of making. To achieve this, I utilise the distinctive qualities of the wet felting process: i.e. the direction and density of the fibre as well as the type of wool. As each material has an artistic message it is always important to think about why I want to achieve something using the felt medium instead of some other material. With *Felt Foldings*, the appeal lies in the apparent contradiction between theme and material; the soft appeal of felt affects angular, sharp-edged objects: it absorbs sound, light, and reflection. The resulting works have amazing resilience and stability of form, but rather than a fixed entity, they can be continuously transformed and have all manner of applications. The structural flexibility adds to the liveliness of the finished objects, which is important to me.'

As part of her development in felt, Andrea completed a 2-year specialist course at the prominent German felt school *Oberrot* while current studies in Art History and Fine Art strengthen her creative and artistic explorations. She grew up in the 1950s and 1960s and feels influenced by the design, colours and art movements of that era; including the optical artist Victor Vasarely, painter Bridget Riley and sculptor Eva Hesse. She says: 'The development of *Felt Foldings*, transferring angular, sharp-edged forms into 3D works of art was inspired by the work of Vasarely. The creation of single spaces is relatively straight-forward, but the linking of repeated space structures required a more sophisticated plan. Speculating about the logical sequence and the construction became the most exciting part of my work. Developing this theme for



Art becomes Wearable, 2016.
Photo: Jonathan Mengel



Deepwater Horizon (detail), 2012.
Photo: Erika Glanzer



Inside is Outside, 2010. Photo: Kyra Porada

my workshops and wearable items has motivated me to continuously refine the process and seek out new aesthetic possibilities.'

Andrea is also known for her felt art inspired by symbolism, in which she transforms single design elements such as stripes and dots into a densely packed felt (without any mixing or blending of the individual design elements)

to create visually rich, multi-dimensional objects that showcase stunning surface designs. It is an aspect of her arts practice that she loves to explore, and share through workshops: 'I am always impressed by the manner in which emotions, knowledge, experiences and history can be communicated by using symbols, reflecting personal and cultural meaning.'

The Silence is Blue, 2010 (seen at right worn by Andrea Noeske-Porada) was the first work she created using the *Felt Foldings* technique. Measuring 190cm by 50cm (75 by 20inch), it was inspired by Yves Klein's *Blue Epoch*. 'For a few weeks', Andrea says, 'I worked only with that particular shade of blue. My idea was to have a monochrome felted relief hanging in a semicircular arch in front of the wall so as to observe variations in perception and emotion when encountering this arch coming from various angles. From close up, the material played a larger role than the form; from farther away, the structure took centre stage. Right inside the arch there was a feeling of silence'. Hung in gallery spaces to great effect, it is a work that can also be worn.

Andrea Noeske-Porada is a German felt maker and fibre artist who is known for her dynamic sculptural works in felt. Andrea teaches and exhibits internationally and works from her studio & art education centre *Kunst im Souterrain* in Wiesbaden Germany. She will teach an in-depth 5-day class at *Fibres West* in Western Australia in July 2017 (www.fibreswest.com.au), followed by workshops in NSW, Canberra, Victoria and WA. See more of Andrea's work at www.kuimsou.de, or <http://anp.kunst-im-souterrain.de>. You can also find her on Facebook: [Andrea Noeske-Porada](https://www.facebook.com/Andrea.Noeske-Porada), or [kunst im souterrain](https://www.facebook.com/kunst.im.souterrain).



Andrea Noeske-Porada wearing *Silence is Blue*.
Photo: Iris Kaczmarczyk

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