



Breathing New Life into Forgotten **Wool**

Laura Miquelon

It begins with an image in a restless mind waiting to express itself at the hands of the artist, inspired by a love of children's literature with a particular bend toward Beatrix Potter, and culminates with a creature that has a personality and a story, with a mission to make someone smile.

This family of seasonal softies came from wool sweaters abandoned by generations gone. Each creation is residing in an old sweater waiting on a shelf, bursting with potential seen only by the artist, and her loving hands painstakingly put together each one piece by piece.

The adventure begins with the felting process. The sound of the washing machine, the snip of scissors, and the whizzing and whirring of the sewing machine encourage the softie that a new life in a loving home might just become a reality. As the softie comes to life, it is hopeful that it will be united with an owner who can experience as much joy and as many smiles as the artist who created it.



TECHNIQUE

I have always been a lover of old things, and I take great delight in utilizing materials that are reclaimed and would be otherwise thrown away. Each softie is made from an old wool sweater, typically procured at a thrift shop. Because my items are seasonal, holiday sweaters and solids in seasonal colors are needed. Seeking and finding these sweaters is typically a stroll down memory lane. The sweaters are then felted, cut into patterns, assembled, and stuffed. Stick legs and embellishments finish off the softies, which are very "green," and breathe new life into things that were homeless. *



TIPS

- Searching for sweaters can be difficult, so I have connections at a number of thrift stores. I am constantly in search mode, and I grab what I can when I can. I also have friends and family on the hunt for me and I am grateful for the help. We will even seek out thrift stores while on vacation in an effort to find something unique.
- When felting my sweaters, I first wash them in cold water, which makes a big difference. It prevents the wool from "seizing up" and creates a much better end result. I then proceed to warm water, and hardly ever use hot water. Some sweaters need three washes to reach the texture I like.
- I find the sticks for legs in my community's yard waste. This allows me to find many at once and recycle something that is on its way out. The sticks need to be dry (not green) for best results.



- Adhesive
- Embellishments: eyes, pipe cleaners, ribbons, beads, etc.
- Fabric: sweaters, repurposed, wool
- Needle & thread
- Scissors
- Sewing machine
- Sticks
- Stuffing
- Washing machine



Laura Miquelon

has been married for 26 years to her high school sweetheart, Kevin, is the mother of four children, and resides in St. Louis, Missouri. You can see more of Laura's work at lauramiquelon.com and she can be reached at laura@lauramiquelon.com.