

Repurposing: Using Upcycled Fabric

Sustainability has emerged as an important issue in recent times. This section will explore the possibilities inherent in recycling used clothing and remnant fabric. Since there is enormous waste created by discarded clothing and accessories, it's a mindful practice to incorporate some of this fabric into feltmaking projects. The loosely woven, natural fiber fabrics lend themselves particularly well to nuno felting. Here are some ideas for including upcycled items into your work.



Recycled Scarves

Old scarves can be a wonderful raw material for the nuno feltmaker. Scarves often come in interesting colors and patterns since they are frequently intended to function as the focal point in styling an outfit. The condition of the scarf is unimportant, as the artist can choose various ways to incorporate it in the piece. Hems and selvages can be retained if a textured line formed on the surface of the piece is preferred (21), or removed to encourage the wool fibers to penetrate the fabric edges during felting (22). The fabric can also be placed overhanging the edge of the wool if a frilled border is desired (23). Sheer scarves make excellent nuno prefelts (24).

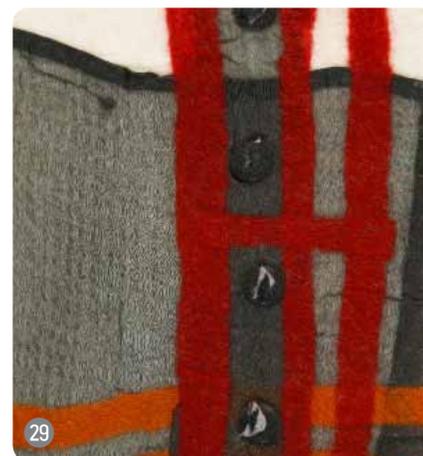


A collection of scarves is put to good use as nuno prefelts and incorporated into this garment.



Recycled Clothing

Before deconstructing a “donor” garment, study its structural components—seams, buttonholes, pockets, and so on—then carefully consider how these separate features might be used in the design of a felted piece (25). Pockets can have prefelts placed inside, which create interesting silhouettes when felted (26). Buttonholes can have nuno prefelts or wool fiber threaded through them, or they can even be used as actual buttonholes on the finished piece (27 and 28). Buttons, when felted over or turned face down between wool and fabric, can be curious dimensional features (29). Pintucks, darts, and gathered components, such as cap sleeves, can form textural elements on the surface of nuno prefelts (30 and 31). Left intact, side seams on the donor garment can be design elements on the felt piece (32).



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Shiny synthetic threads, which are sometimes woven into fine silk fabrics, can also be used to create textured, glittery prefelts (33–35).

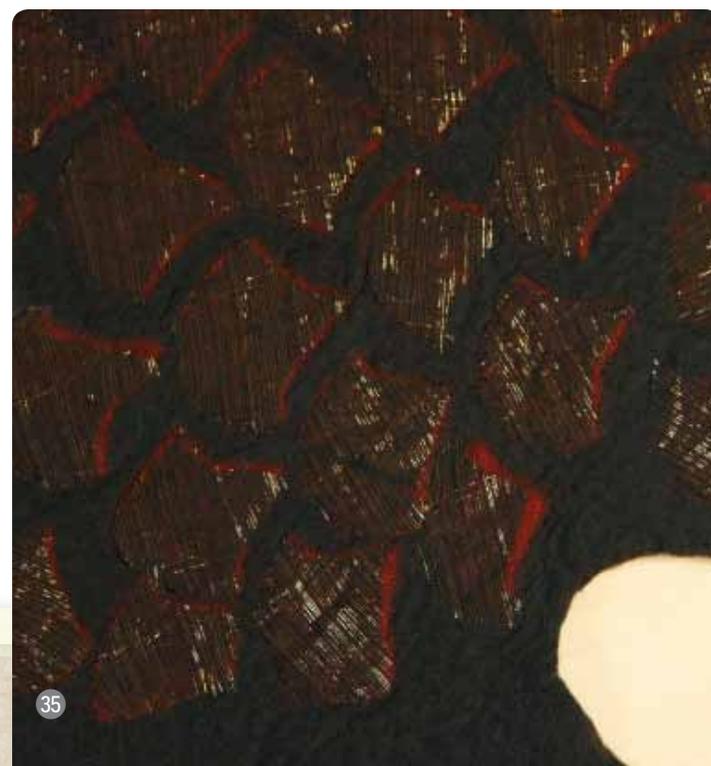
With their bold colors and decorations, old costumes can be wonderful additions to the nuno prefelt palette. The original color of the deconstructed garment can be altered by varying the color of the wool used in the prefelt or in the base, as described in the Color section (page 46).



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Another useful commodity is old lace—the tattier the better! Any disintegrating natural fabric, particularly silk, can often felt well. The deterioration of the weave allows more wool fiber to penetrate the surface in felting, and the wool stabilizes the fabric to prevent further disintegration. This distressed fabric can be used as a decorative motif (36–38).



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