

Selwedge

DESIGNER EDGE



JANE JACKSON

“Although I quite like doing pictures of wildlife, getting their faces right, especially the eyes, is really difficult. With just a slightly wrong stab of a felting needle, an animal’s face can be transformed into something that looks

very fierce, cross-eyed or way too cutesy. I’ve had to pull the heads off many an animal that wouldn’t come good and start again. I have a picture of a buck hare that is fine in every respect except for a really aggressive stare that follows you round the room!”

In her artworks, Jane Jackson’s animals sometimes take on personalities that are a little different from what she had in mind, but that just adds to their charm. Made using top-quality Harris Tweed and needlefelting, her textural landscape ‘paintings’ showcase UK landmarks and wilderness areas in vivid colours and historic detailing.

The setting of her work space is a bright conservatory in a small village on the Northumberland coast, in north-east England. “It’s a bit cold up here. The countryside is wild, and it’s the least-populated county in England. Northumberland is also next door to Scotland and the Lake District, both places I love. The beaches here are long, beautiful and largely empty of people. There are also lots of ruined castles, heather-clad moorland and hills and lots of wildlife,” says Jane.

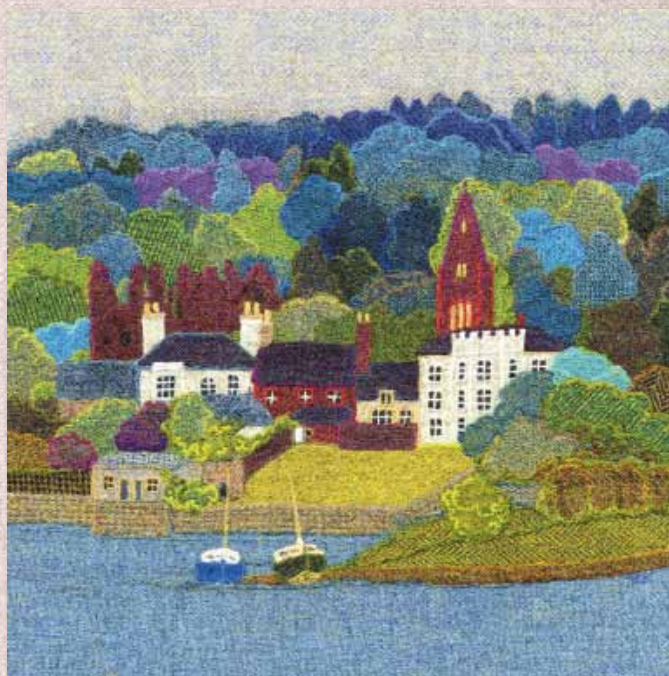
So, it’s not hard to understand why her surroundings continually inspire and motivate her. You can practically breathe the air of her location through her handworked pieces.

Jane is drawn to the rough texture, wide colour range and sense of heritage in her preferred Harris Tweed fabric. “By law, Harris Tweed must be hand woven by crofters and processed on the remote and wild Scottish islands of the Outer Hebrides. As it is hand woven, sometimes a particular pattern or colour



may end up being a ‘one off’. So if I see something I really like and think will be very useful, I often buy a few metres because it may never be woven again.”

The artworks are usually based on a photo, from which Jane creates a line drawing. She then picks tweeds for each element of the picture. “Once I’m happy with my selection of tweeds, I cut up my line drawing and use the paper pieces in the same way that you would use a dressmaking pattern, pinning them to the various tweeds so I can cut out exactly the right shapes. I then gradually build up the collage by pinning the cut pieces of tweed on top of one another.” Then it’s a matter of lightly hand felting everything into place. When she is satisfied with the composition, Jane uses an embellisher (needlefelting machine) to firmly felt the design.



“The next stage is the most challenging,” she says. “I hand-needlefelt various wool yarns into place to cover every rough edge of tweed and to add detailing. Then I very, very carefully go over the finished picture with the embellisher to make sure everything is absolutely firmly felted into place”.

Welcome to Jane Jackson’s wild world, where cattle are clad in tartan, seas and trees are herringboned and animals are obliged to wear the right expressions on their tweedy faces. For more information on Jane Jackson of Bright Seed Textiles visit www.brightseedtextiles.com or email brightseedtextiles@gmail.com.

— Janai Welz