

# Selvedge

## DESIGNER EDGE



CAROL ARNOTT



Carol Arnott's work is all about capturing the essence of idyllic, seaside neighbourhoods (and the odd craggy fisherman!) in fabric and thread. As a testament to her talents, you can almost feel the sea breeze and taste the salty air while viewing her textile harbourscapes and felt hoops.

From quaint cottages on one side to the wee fishing boats on the other, Carol's shoreline walks along the east coast of Scotland provide the perfect scenery and characters to inspire her. "I live a stone's throw away from the East Neuk of Fife, whose harbour cottages were built hundreds of years ago. This makes them all a bit weathered, unique looking and a bit higgledy-piggledy," she says.

And the fishermen don't let her down, either. "I collect old photos of fisher-folk – their wrinkled, weathered faces and wild hair are an absolute gift to draw in thread."

Carol takes lots of photos of cottages to use as a reference, paying special attention to the interesting details in the buildings. She uses a mixture of felt and fabric (denim, tweed and upholstery materials), sourcing them from

local rummage shops, whenever possible. "But I'm a magpie – I'll use anything!" admits Carol.

All her work is hand sewn, with very tiny stitches. "I usually pick the most interesting window, in the most interesting building and work outwards from there. The picture grows organically, and it determines its own size," she says. "I normally use felt to make the windows on my pieces – it doesn't fray and it lets them stand proud of the main shape of the buildings, giving them a three-dimensional quality."

Recreating the gentle movement of waves in denim is the most challenging part, according to Carol. "It's difficult to make the folds take on the random character of waves and make them secure at the same time," she says.

As for framing, she's recently started using old reconditioned mirror frames for her harbour artworks and would like to start using other reclaimed timber, too, such as old fishing boxes.

She and her husband have plans to build a new garden workshop, so they have a dedicated space for this work.

On top of building a studio, creating art, exhibiting, teaching workshops and producing tutorials and kits, Carol also works part time as a Community Learning and Development practitioner for a local council as well as being a freelance community artist.

"I get a lot from being creative and am passionate about making artwork in textiles. I feel driven to be sewing and enjoy trying out new ideas and fabrics. I try to switch up the different kinds of pictures I'm working







on to keep things fresh and interesting for myself," says Carol.

We may have focused on Carol's fishermen and harbourscapes, but she's also inspired by the rolling heathered hills she sees when she travels inland. The signature features of these artworks are charming bothies set near the escarpments. "A bothy is a remote Scottish building used by ramblers and crofters to shelter for the night," explains Carol. "I sometimes use a special type of felt called 'Heathered Felt' to make my 'Wee Bothy Landscapes'. It has a lovely fleck in it and mirrors the Scottish landscape well."

For those of us who can't live in between pretty fishing towns and undulating countryside, we can at least sample a piece of the beauty through Carol's art.

To find out more about Carol Arnott Arts, visit the website ([www.carolarnott.com](http://www.carolarnott.com)); Facebook page ([www.facebook.com/CarolArnottArts](http://www.facebook.com/CarolArnottArts)); and Etsy store ([www.etsy.com/uk/shop/CarolArnottArts](http://www.etsy.com/uk/shop/CarolArnottArts)).

— Janai Velez



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