

ARTefacts

Imports and Inspiration: Decorative Details from around the world



Exploring the objects for inspiration

A group from West Berkshire Minority Ethnic Forum worked with West Berkshire Museum, Newbury, to explore objects from the World Cultures and Social History collections. They then created responses to these pieces using felt.

All the objects chosen for the project are rich in decorative detail and the group explored the designs and their meaning or stories before embarking on their own work. The objects were purposefully chosen because little was known about their origins. This meant the inspiration was completely drawn from the objects themselves.

The group worked with artist Ellen Brown who taught them to make their own felt from scratch. They then learnt how to embellish it using needle felting and



Adding on decorative details using needle felting



Laying out the base of merino wool



Rubbing the wool with soapy warm water to make it felt



Cutting through the layers of felt to reveal hidden colours

cutting techniques. None of the participants had ever done this before and they were amazed by the effects they could produce.

West Berkshire has a long tradition of wool based crafts and the area's wealth was founded in the medieval cloth trade. One of the processes in turning fleece to cloth is felting. This is not the first time wool craft has happen at West Berkshire Museum. One of the buildings that makes up the Museum is Newbury Cloth Hall which was built as a cloth factory in 1626

West Berkshire Museum is currently closed for redevelopment and is currently scheduled to reopen in 2014.