

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Felt artist Janice Arnold live at work at Bellevue Arts Museum

Bellevue, WA – This June, Bellevue Arts Museum offers visitors a rare glimpse into the fascinating process of large-scale felt-making. Starting on June 3, Olympia-based felt artist Janice Arnold will transform the Museum's Forum into a working studio, planning, designing and eventually mounting her new, site-specific installation.

Arnold will first lay up huge swaths of raw fibers turning BAM's Forum literally into a "dry studio." Over the next three weeks, she will implement her design and complex mapping system which will eventually become her felt installation—the newest in a series of intimate window displays for Bellevue Arts Museum.

Installation and accompanying observation opportunities are FREE to the public and will take place in Bellevue Arts Museum's Forum on the following days and times:

Lay up

Thursdays, June 3 & 17, 11 am - 5 pm
Fridays, June 4, 11 & 18 11 am - 5 pm
Saturday, June 12, 12 - 5 pm

Installation

Tuesday, June 22, 11 am - 5 pm
Wednesday, June 23, 11 am - 5 pm

Felt is believed to be the oldest type of fabric. It is non-woven and made predominantly from raw wool. The principle elements of felt-making have remained the same for thousands of years: moisture, agitation and pressure. To create traditional felt, raw wool fibers are layered together. Hot water is applied to saturate the fibers, the moist heat opening the small naturally occurring scales in the wool fiber, and through agitation (rolling or rubbing the wool) along with pressure, these fibers irrevocably entangle. Repeating the agitation and pressure through hours of manipulation condenses the fibers, shrinking them into the resulting felt, which is approximately 40% of the original lay-up size. It is the entanglement and density of the fibers that give felt its inherent strength and texture.

About the artist:

Janice Arnold has made it her life to know and understand felt, from researching and working with nomadic tribes of Central Asia and Mongolia to studying the high-tech world of industrial felt. Finding a passion for fine fabric at an early age, Arnold studied a wide variety of textile traditions in college, traveling extensively to learn traditional techniques within cultural contexts. In 1999, the artist first began making handmade felt for a large-scale sculpture commission for the Nordstrom Corporation stores. She has since focused intently on felt as an art form, continually inventing new techniques and combinations of raw materials, the result of which challenges our concepts and expectations of this textile.

Bellevue Arts Museum is the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design. BAM celebrates regional, national and international artists working in a broad range of craft media, including ceramics, fiber, metal, wood and glass. The Museum also offers a unique array of free or low-cost educational and community programs such as artist demonstrations, lectures and workshops as well as a variety of engaging and fun hands-on kids activities. The Bellevue Arts Museum artsfair, the largest and most prestigious arts event in the Pacific Northwest attracting over 350,000 visitors, is held annually in July. BAM is located in the heart of downtown Bellevue, provides free parking and is wheelchair accessible. www.bellevuearts.org

For more information on this exhibit and other Museum-related programming, please contact Tanja Baumann (see contact information above).

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