

***Collective Hands Blooming*, 2016**

***FELT à la main with LOVE* by Chantal Cardinal**

As Surrey is a fast-growing community in BC, I wanted to create an artifact that would bring people together and create a message of inclusiveness. I wanted the imagery to convey the idea of individuals flourishing and growing collectively into a colourful, multicultural, blossoming community.

My medium is wool and my process is wet felting. For me the felting process – which involves building layers upon layers to create a strong foundation – has become a metaphor for community. I use local ethically-sourced Romney sheep wool, and lovingly hand wash, dye and card the wool to create a large house-shaped foundation, reflecting affordable housing and a feeling of endless possibilities. Then colourful pieces are felted to the foundation to create a thick, interlocking, fibre wall-hanging: a collective of “hands”, which appear as though they are blooming. The hands represent how we can provide people with a hand up, so they can work towards becoming self-reliant, grow and flourish in the community.

I want to share my love of working with wool, a sustainable and versatile medium through *FELT à la main with LOVE*. I see felting as part of a slow movement towards using simple and natural renewable fibre sources where so many beautiful possibilities can emerge from the energy of one's hands.