

## VIRTUAL GALLERY

37907 Second Avenue, Squamish, BC  
<https://squamishlibrary.ca/foyer-gallery/>

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January 23<sup>rd</sup> – March 18<sup>th</sup>

# VANESSA SPARROW

*Vaalia*

felted fibre vessels and wall hangings



**Title: EARTH**

Finn wool

Size: 20 x 9"

Price: NFS



**Title: VAALIA**

Norwegian, Finn & Merino wool, flax fibre,  
Mulberry silk, found wool

Size: 15 x 16"

Price: NFS



**Title: FISHBASKET**

Finn & Merino wool, cane, hanji paper

Size: 29 x 6.5"

Price: \$450.



**Title: MURANO 1**

Norwegian & Merino wool, kozo paper, silk gauze

Size: 26 x 10"

Price: \$420.



**Title: MURANO 2**

Norwegian & Merino wool, kozo paper, silk gauze, cheesecloth, sumi ink

Size: 36 x 8"

Price: \$420.



**Title: ANCIENT**

Norwegian wool, found wood, pigment

Size: 16 x 12"

Price: NFS



**Title: BOULDER**

Norwegian wool, beach stones, hemp twine

Size: 8" x 13"

Price: \$230.



**Title: KINSTUGI 1**

Merino wool, black mulberry silk, gold silk taffeta

Size: 11.5 x 9"

Price: \$220.



**Title: KINSTUGI 2**

Merino wool, gold recycled sari silk, ink, pencil

Size: 19" dia.

Price: \$300.



**Title: KHRYOSOS 1**

Merino wool, silk gauze, pigment

Size: 8 x 6.5"

Price: NFS



**Title: KHRYOSOS 2**

Merino wool, silk gauze, pigment

Size: 13.5 x 4"

Price: \$170.



**Title: KHRYOSOS 3**

Merino wool, silk chiffon, pigment

Size: 4.5 x 5"

Price: \$115.



**Title: FISSURE**

Finn & Merino wool, ink

Size: 14" dia.

Price: \$280.



**Title: FIRE**

Finn wool, silk fibre, wool locks, pine needles, pigment, linen thread

Size: 11 x 7.5"

Price: NFS



**Title: GALAXY BOWL 1**

Norwegian & Merino wool

Size: 6.5 x 7"

Price: \$100.



**Title: JEWEL BOWL 1**

Merino wool, gold viscose fibre

Size: 4 x 5.5"

Price: \$95.



**Title: JEWEL BOWL 2**

Merino wool, gold viscose fibre

Size: 3.5 x 5"

Price: \$80.



**Title: GALAXY BOWL 2**

MMāori wool, Philippine gold paper, silk thread

Size: 7.5 x 7.5"

Price: \$95.



**Title: SEAPOD 1**

Merino wool, mulberry silk, pearl beads

Size: 4.5 x 6.5"

Price: \$90.



**Title: SEAPOD 2**

Merino wool, wool locks, black tussah silk, ink

Size: 8 x 8"

Price: \$100.



**Title: SEAPOD 3**

Merino wool, silk netting, glue, ink

Sizes: 4.5 x 4.5"

Price: \$80.



**Title: COIL BOWL**

Valais wool, Merino wool wrapped wire

Size: 14.5" dia.

Price: \$215. (pods sold separately, \$30 each)



## VANESSA SPARROW, *'Vaalia'* – felted fibre vessels and wall hangings

### Q & A with VANESSA SPARROW

Q: Describe this exhibit? What was your creative stimulation for this particular series?

*A: Vaalia is a Finnish word meaning "to cherish, nurture, treasure or uphold", and pays homage to my first felting teacher, who is Finnish, as well as my favourite wool to use in making vessels, which comes from the Finnish Landrace sheep.*

*The work you see in Vaalia is the result of the last four years of evolution in my creative and technical abilities as a fibre artist: from first experiments in creating interesting surface effects, to recent works that are more ambitious in scale and form, and include elements such as hand-painted silk, found wood, and stones. All the works reflect my desire to create pieces that celebrate organic shapes and textures, and evoke a sense of wonder and delight.*

*Sculptural felting is an unfamiliar art form to many people, so I have chosen to include a wide range of techniques and forms in the works on display, in order to showcase some of the vast potential of these remarkable materials.*

Q: What's your background? How long have you been doing art?

*A: I always loved to play with fibres and make things as a child, but it wasn't until many years and two rounds of art school later that I realized that painting wasn't my thing, and rediscovered those childhood delights in the process of felt-making. I've been exploring sculptural fibre art, mainly using wool, paper and silk, since 2015, and feel as though I've only just begun to understand the possibilities of these incredible materials!*

Q: How has your work evolved over time?

*A: I was originally drawn to using a rich colour palette in my work - probably the result of all those years of painting - but when a print-maker friend and I decided to collaborate on a show in 2021, I discovered an affinity for the monochrome. Using more neutral tones brings focus to the surface design elements of a piece, and creates a sense of calm and simplicity that I love.*

*I've also been on a journey of discovery to see what other fibres and media I can combine with felt, leading me to incorporate flax, sari silk, washi paper, sumi ink, and all kinds of things in my pieces. A major creative prompt for me is to look at a new material and ask: I wonder if this would combine with felt??*

Q: What is most important to you in your art?

*A: Aside from the simple joy of being able to express my fascination with organic shapes and textures, something I value deeply about felting is the physical, tactile nature of the process. I was always getting in trouble at art school for using my hands to paint (not ideal when using cadmium red, say), and now I get to play with my materials as much as I like! In fact, you can't make good felt without your hands learning how the wool feels underneath them at each stage. "Seeing" the emerging pieces with my hands is just as important as seeing with my eyes, which is immensely satisfying to me.*

*I also appreciate the lack of toxic chemicals and waste involved in felting; my materials are mainly natural fibres, olive oil soap and water. No solvents, glues, glazes or heavy metals. However, as someone committed to animal welfare, I do worry about the use of wool and silk. I do my best to ensure that I source wool from humanely raised sheep, but there are of course things I can't know about the way the animals*

*have been treated. I have started to investigate sourcing wool from small farms on Vancouver Island, and plan to make this a focus of my practice going forward. Silk is of course derived by killing the silkworms that make it, and this does trouble me. I have been exploring silk alternatives (such as viscose and bamboo), and do not intend to replenish my stocks of silk fibre once they are used up.*

**Q:** What's something people would be surprised to learn about your process?

*A: That there is no glue or sewing involved, and none of the pieces are built around moulds. I start with piles of fluffy wool, which is laid out in small pieces around a flat resist, and then wet down and rubbed to form a loose fabric. Once the resist is removed, I have a floppy bag of partially-made felt that needs to be stiffened and shaped into a self-supporting structure. I do this through sheer muscle power, with the help of a few custom-made hand tools, and it can be a pretty amazing workout!*

A short video of my process can be seen at my website: [www.sparrowfelt.com](http://www.sparrowfelt.com), and if you are interested in learning how it all works, I teach a number of basic felting classes each year from my home studio in Powell River.

**For more information:**

Website: [www.sparrowfelt.com](http://www.sparrowfelt.com)

Instagram: [sparrowfelt](https://www.instagram.com/sparrowfelt)