

INSPIRED BY THE COAST

Having lived in various coastal towns, cities and land-locked villages around the UK, Karen Wyeth returns to the sea for inspiration when creating her richly coloured textile pictures

WORDS **Terry Barber**



FIND KAREN

See Karen's work at karenwyeth.co.uk. She will exhibit at **Art in the Park**, Leamington Spa, 5-6 August; in the **Summer Mixed Show** at Dolby Gallery, Oundle, 4-25 August; **Kenilworth Arts Festival**, 17-23 September; and **The Stratford Art Fair**, Stratford-upon-Avon, 3-5 November. Her work can also be seen at **Ferrers Gallery** in Staunton Harold near Ashby de la Zouch. Keep up to date with Karen on Instagram ([karenwyethfeltartist](https://www.instagram.com/karenwyethfeltartist)) and Facebook ([KarenWyethFeltArtist](https://www.facebook.com/KarenWyethFeltArtist)).

KAREN WYETH

Contemporary felt artist

Exploring Britain's coastline is a big part of Karen Wyeth's life as an artist, and you only have to take one look at her vibrant textile pictures to get a sense of the joy she finds there. 'I love the ever-changing blues of the sea,' she says, 'and the play of light on the waves is an endless source of inspiration.'

Born and raised in Kent, Karen gained a degree in Fine Art and English Literature but found herself working in the charity sector for the next 20 years. 'Art fell by the wayside,' she says. However, nine of those years were spent in towns along the Kent coast, including Walmer, Kingsdown and Deal, fuelling her love of the seaside before arriving, via East Anglia, in the Midlands. 'I currently live in a village that's about as far from the sea as you can get in England,' she laughs, 'but I'm still very much inspired by the coast and my dream is to live by the sea again.'

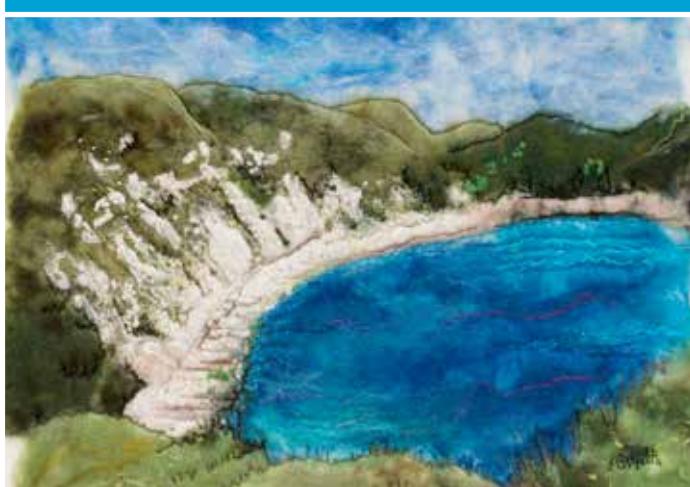
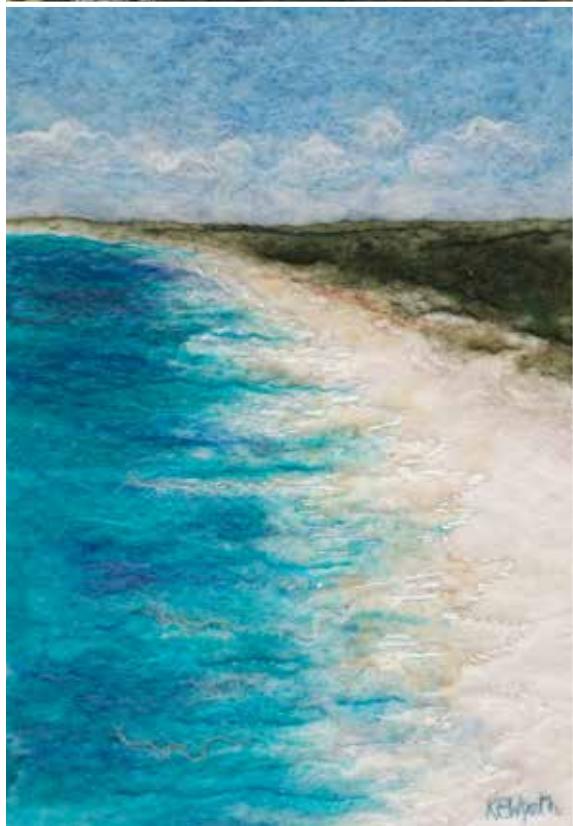
It was when Karen had to take time out from work after being diagnosed with ME that she returned to her

creative roots. 'I've always loved the Impressionists and their use of light and colour,' she says. 'When I discovered the medium of felted merino wool I found that it brings me closer to their style because you can't be too precise. I build up layers of wool then rub it with hot soapy water – it's a bit like putting a favourite jumper on a hot wash, when it comes out really small and tight.' Once dry, she adds detail using free machine embroidery and hand-stitching.

Karen visits the coast often to take photos to work from, most recently Lulworth Cove and Durdle Door in Dorset. 'One of the first things I like to do is take my shoes off and walk barefoot through the surf. It's so relaxing and gives me a chance to think. Since childhood I've loved looking for special stones or shells, and I've recently put my collection in a clear glass lamp base. When I put the lamp on, it lights them up and takes me back to all the wonderful beaches I have walked on.'

For details of Karen's felting workshops in Rugby from 11 September, call 07789 750087 or use the email form on her website.

'THE PLAY OF LIGHT ON THE WAVES IS AN ENDLESS SOURCE OF INSPIRATION'



CLOCKWISE, FROM TOP LEFT Felt artworks of seascapes from Karen have striking azure tones in common and include *Cape du Couedic lighthouse, Flinders Chase National Park*; *Beach huts in blue; Hanson Bay 2, Kangaroo Island, Australia*; *Lulworth Cove*; and *Main Beach, North Stradbroke Island, Australia*