

*"Re-imagined" a Challenge with a Difference;*

Rugmaking Techniques: Braiding



Braiding combined with Traditional Rug Hooking;  
Kimono and Obi

"Quiet Dream"

By Kris McDermet, VT, USA

<http://www.krismcdermetrugs.com/artist.html>

Braided-in Mat and Bowl by

Maggie Whyte, Canberra, ACT, Australia

Vice-President of Australian Rugmakers  
Guild



Traditional braided mat

by Val Galvin;

Renditions in Rags Hooked and Braided Rugs

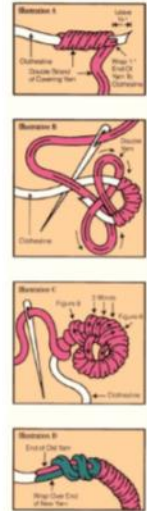
Chermainus, BC, Canada

<https://www.facebook.com/RenditionsinRags/>

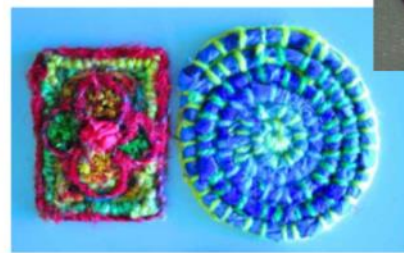
## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Wrapped Coils

Robin Inkpen from Western Australia uses this technique, found on the website of the [Crafty Yarn Council](#) to create her colourful vessels (permission to share granted by Crafty Yarn Council)



Judith Stephens, South Australia creates coils to add to her rugs, wall hangings and 3D pieces using a method, involving wrapping rope with fabric or yarn and then stitching.



Josephine Franco, Western Australia, used Judith Stephens' method of coiling for this installation, "Handing it On" - coils in a mat and to create the 'arms for hands' holding antique and new rugmaking tools.





## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques : Quillies (Standing Wool Rugs)



In the Northern Hemisphere Quillies are traditionally made from narrow strips of woollen fabric and stitched.

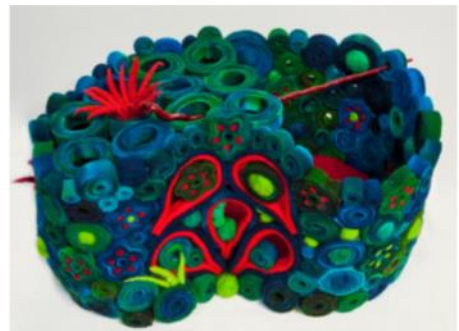
Brooches :- Star, by Peigi Fairs, Ont., Canada

Circles, by Sheila Mitchell, BC, Canada



[Standing Wool rug making - Quillie Rugs](#) - a Facebook Group

Admin, Gill Curwen, UK - Gill shares images of standing wool rugs (quillies) in this group.



Quillies by Kira Mead, Albany, Western Australia

<https://accidentalrugmaker.wordpress.com/>

Kira's work is featured in articles in Rug Hooking Magazine and in "Coils, Folds, Twists and Turns: Contemporary Techniques in Fiber" by [Tracy Jamar FiberWorks](#)



## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques : Tomboy or Chunky Rug Maker



Some 8 or 9 years ago Judith Stephens, SA, discovered a rug making tool called a Tomboy and began making rugs by coiling woollen casings stuffed with scraps of fabric. This is one of many rugmaking techniques used by Judith. For more information contact [studioblue20@gmail.com](mailto:studioblue20@gmail.com)



In 2012, while at The International Guild of Handhooking Rugmakers Conference in Strathalbyn, South Australia, Maggie Whyte was introduced to Judith's Chunky Rugmaker (Tomboy) tool.

Maggie decided the Chunky Rugmaker would be great for using up scraps of felt left-overs from her felt flowers and rugs.

Always creative, Maggie has used this technique to make various bowls and jewellery and is now combining coils made with the Chunky Rugmaker and the proddy technique to make rugs.



For information about the Chunky Rugmaker tool exmail:

[rugcraftingaustralia@gmail.com](mailto:rugcraftingaustralia@gmail.com)





## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Proggy/Proddy



This rugmaking technique, called by many names, is probably one of the easiest, as small pieces can be prodded without a frame, using the simplest of tools, basically any pointed object that will punch a hole in an open weave backing i.e. a piece of dowel with sharpened point or modified dolly peg.

Having said that, some rugmakers do use frames and commercial prodding tools.



Short pieces of fabric are poked from the back of the work to the front creating a shag effect.

Longer strips can be used, also poked through from the back, and then the loops on the front side cut or “shorn” creating a plush surface, also more detail can be achieved. Both of these techniques are well illustrated in “*Proggy & Hooky Rugs*” by Miriam Miller, Milton, NSW. This is the only rug hooking book published by an Australian author. Miriam’s book is available online <http://www.shoal.net.au/~narrowilly/> or from Guild rughooking instructors. An image of this “log cabin design” proggy rug created with hand-dyed blankets is in Miriam’s book and shown here with her permission.



Below are some examples of rugs made by Guild members using hessian backing and recycled fabrics, mostly T-Shirts (shown with their permission):



Anne Schafer, VIC



Kathleen Smith, WA



Jane Cobb, WA



Jacqui Thomson, NSW

This techniques can also be used to create novelty items :-



Proggy Brooch,  
Jo Franco, WA



Bear Rug (head), Annette White, QLD



Proggy flower & bag,  
Judith Stephens, SA



Christmas Tree  
Rennette, WA

Rug Hooking Magazine provides a link to a Gene Shepherd video showing how to make proddy mats.

<https://www.rughookingmagazine.com/How-to-Hook-a-Rug-Video-Tutorials/Traditional-Proddy-Mats>

Gene works mostly with hand-dyed wool but you can use this technique with any fabric - if the fabrics very fine and gauzy, you'll need to cut your pieces wider to give a more full or plush look.

Here is a proggy bedside rug made with strips of torn sheets.

A first rug by a new rugmaker.

No makers name at this time as its a surprise Christmas present, one little girl is going to be very happy with her Nanna.



## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Stick Weaving

Yet another rug making technique in the “standing wool” rug family.

Using a simple tool and any type of fabric strips or wool yarn, you can create a type of “braid” which can be wound and stitched in the same manner as a rug made by traditional braiding, Chunky Rug Maker (Tomboy) or creating quillies.

As with quillies, glue can also be used i.e. this small trivet.



Stick weaving also makes sturdy shoulder straps for hooked bags as shown.

Bags and handles are by Judith Stephens, South Australia. (For availability of tool email Email: Judith at [studioblue20@gmail.com](mailto:studioblue20@gmail.com) or Jo at [rughookingaustralia.com.au](http://rughookingaustralia.com.au))



A first attempt at stick weaving by Elaine of the Wanneroo Rugmakers Group in Western Australia



A work in progress by Tina Triggs a member of the Western Australian Fibre & Textile Assn.





## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: HOOKY or Traditional Rug Hooking

Traditional rug hooking is a simple matter of pulling strips of fabric or yarn through an open-weave backing, usually on a frame. Typically used in the US and Canada, is hand-dyed wool fabric cut into thin strips with a fabric cutter (stripper). The original stripper, has cutting heads with sharp blades while a more recent version uses cartridges with pressure wheels. The wool strips, numbered from #2 - #12, are measured in 32<sup>nd</sup> of an inch. i.e. #2 = 2/32<sup>nd</sup> inch. Pulling even loops of thin strips of firm wool fabric, hand-dyed in gradated swatches of colour, gives the hand hooked pieces a carpet or tapestry appearance.

In Australia where fabric strippers (made in USA) are not easily available, assorted recycled fabric are cut with a rotary cutter, scissors or torn. Wool fabric is also not easily available, so most rug hookers use any recycled clothing or household items. You can force recycled fabrics (dress material, T-shirt, sheets, yarn etc) to form even loops but due to the different weights of these fabrics they naturally create a more textural surface if just pulled through the backing - especially when loops are pulled to varying heights. So the fine shaded “painting with wool” gives way to a more sculptural appearance. Having said that, some rug hookers in Australia do import equipment and supplies and follow the traditional method. Here are examples from around the country – more examples of Australian Rugmakers work can be seen on the Guild’s Blog [Rugmaking Australia](https://rugcraftingaustralia.com.au).



Chris Noorbergen, Yarra Valley Rugmakers, Victoria - working on a traditional N.American Design, “Terhan” by Rittmere, Canada with narrow strips of wool fabric



Story rug designed & hooked with wool fabric by Chris Noorbergen, VIC. Chris uses imported tools and has made her own frames. See more of her & other Victorians work on their group blog <http://victorianrugmakers.blogspot.com.au/>



Judi Tompkins, Sunshine Coast Rugcrafters, QLD works almost entirely with recycled fabrics designing her own 3-D pieces & using creative framing techniques.

<https://rugcraftingaustralia.com.au>



Maggie Whyte, ACT - also a member of the Narrawilly Proggy Rugmakers designs all her own patterns and has a knack for adding creative touches like the stones collected in Alice Springs at the Beanie Festival, added to this piece hooked in memory of the trip.



“Broom from the Air” designed and hooked by Judith Stephens of the Strath Matters, SA. Judith hooks mainly with wool yarn (hand-dyed carpet wool).

Marion Nefiodovis, also of Strath Matters has taken rughooking off the floor.

[strathmattersrughooking.wordpress.com](http://strathmattersrughooking.wordpress.com)

Coffee table rug designed & hooked using recycled fabrics by Jo Franco, Wanneroo Rugmakers, WA.

<https://wanneroorugmakers.com/>





## "Re-imagined" a Challenge with a Difference



### Rug Making Techniques: Punch Needle

**Punch needle embroidery** seems to have predated punch needle rug hooking – thanks to Google you can read about the history of the Russian punch needle embroiderers on "[Folk n Fiber](#)" Who knew there was even a magazine for punch needle embroiderers – "[Punch Needle and Primitive Stitches™](#)" Punch Needle embroidery was brought to the fore in Australia by Pamela Gurney with her book "*Dancing Needles*" first published in Victoria in 1997 and reprinted in NSW 2004.

**Punch needle rug hooking** - Amy Oxford began making punch needle style hooked rugs in 1982 and in 1995 developed her own style of punch needle, the Oxford Punch Needle. On [Amy's website](#) you can read of her creative journey, to where her name has become synonymous with punch needle rug hooking. Amy has taught punch needle hooking in public schools, private groups, guilds, clubs, craft schools, and rug hooking schools across the United States and Canada and she offers teacher's certification program each summer. [Bec Anderson \(QLD\)](#) a member of the Australian Rugmakers Guild is an accredited Oxford Punch Teacher and new member, [Clare Thornley \(NSW\)](#), is an authorized Oxford Punch Needle supplier and teacher. Other Guild members have learned this technique in Canada or the USA or from visiting Canadians. Here are some examples of their work.....



**QLD:** Sally Randal, her punch needle rugs and the frame she designed with plastic teeth.

Bec Andersen teaches hooking & facilitates community art projects - see her website for details <https://www.becandersen.com/>



#### **NSW:**

Clare Thornley's 8 yo son with his cushion which he punched for a Christmas present.



<https://www.feltfine.com.au/>

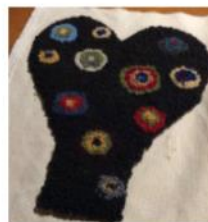
Embroidery punch needle tool used by Miriam Miller to create, with crochet cotton, the insert for a greeting card. Miriam & Jacquie Thomson were taught punch needle rug hooking by Sybil Mercer, Canada

<http://www.shoal.net.au/~narrowilly/>

#### **VIC:**



Tote bag, paper pattern from Halcyon(USA), punched by Anne Schafer with carpet yarn and Oxford Rug Punch Needle.



"Make Do", a pattern by Country Threads Magazine, Designer Unknown, punched on monks cloth by Anne



## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Latch Hooking

Mention “rug hooking” and most people immediately think of “**Latch hooking**” and as an activity made available to convalescents, particularly soldiers after WWII.

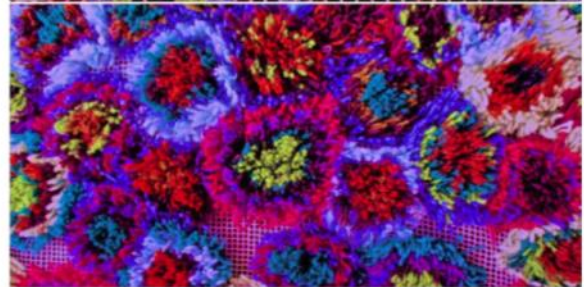
Latch hooking was also very popular in the 1970’s - sold as kits with tool, pre-printed patterns on rug canvas and pre-cut synthetic yarns and wool/synthetic blends.

A Latch hook tool with it’s rounded head and clip, is used to pull and knot pre-cut yarn through a specially woven rug canvas with holes ranging from 3.3 to 5 holes per inch with the rug canvas held on the knee or on a table.

While latch hooking conjures up images of commercial kits which are still available online from companies in North America and UK, there are those like the Happy Hooker in Tasmania who chose to create their own patterns – examples can be seen here courtesy of [Joanne Wild](#)



Tasmania, [Art as Mania](#) – latch-hooked rug by Laura



Busy hands -

you can see a video [here](#) of the progress made by AlysonJean (right)



## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Locker Hooking



Locker hooking, a common way of making rugs in the UK in the 1920's became quite popular in Australia in the 1970's. Due to a small, but very significant Aussie variation (a change in the type of wool used - fresh unspun wool) it has been reported in rug hooking magazine articles in North America as “Australian Locker Hooking”.

The same firm “rug canvas” (3.75 count mesh) used for Latch Hooking is used as a base for Locker Hooking.

A Locker hooking tool, similar to a crochet hook with an eye in the other end, which is threaded with string

to lock in the fabric strips as they are pulled up through the mesh.

A history of this technique can be found on [Mother Earth News](#).

“How to” instructions for Locker hooking can be found on this [free sharing resource](#)

On YouTube video you can see how to [make a tote bag](#) and

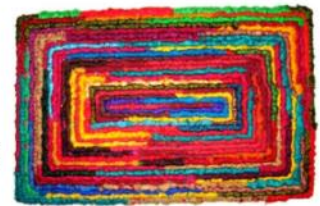
how to create a [floral pattern](#)



Example of Australian Locker Hooking on display Alexander Park Craft House Western Australia



**Robin Inkpen, Donnybrook, Western Australia**  
locker hooked this tote bag, and place mat using sari silk off-cuts.



This locker hooked bag for a tablet was created by **Judi Tompkins, Queensland, Australia**, also using sari silk.





## "Re-imagined" a Challenge with a Difference

### Rug Making Techniques: Hand Tufting

Inspired by nature, with a philosophy guided by William Morris  
"Have nothing in your home that you do not know to be useful and believe to be beautiful"  
Textile Artist, Bec Andersen, the only member of the Australian Rugmakers Guild who uses  
this technique, designs her rugs to be walked on as well as beautiful.

Specializing in natural dyes, Bec hand dyes 100% wool.



Trained as an Industrial Designer her work blends technology and hand craft.

The design process starts on her computer using Photoshop with often an image of a plant as inspiration while also drawing from a surrounding palette of her dyed wool .

The piece is fully designed before Bec stretches a canvas onto a vertical frame and draws directly onto it.



Then comes the use of a hand-tufting gun, which is operated on air and electricity to basically paint with wool.

This part of the process requires Bec to wear ear protection and climb up onto a scaffold.

Like many rug makers she listens to music and drifts into her own thoughts.



Bec works mostly on commission pieces, however still finds time to facilitate community projects, many involving teaching children the punch needle rug hooking technique.

Bec gives private and group workshops in traditional rug making techniques and hosts a gathering of rugmakers.

I visited Bec in her workshop surrounded by lush tropical vegetation on Mt. Tamborine and it's easy to see how she can draw inspiration from nature. If you're ever on the Gold Coast, the scenic - an understatement for this drive which is basically straight up a mountain, although the road is anything but straight - is not to be missed.

Do make sure you call first to set up an appointment as this is one very busy artist.

Click through to Bec's website <https://www.becandersen.com> to see more images of her work. These images are shown and the description of the process summarized here with the artists permission.



Agapanthus



Firewheel



Wattle Series



Luna's Party



## “Re-imagined” a Challenge with a Difference

Rug Making Techniques: [Toothbrush Rugmaking or Scandinavian Nalbinding/Naalbinding](#) (knotless knitting) - predates knitting and crochet with which it's sometimes confused, as finished items look similar. (Right a Nalbinding tool).

Old-fashioned toothbrushes with a hole in the handle were also used as tools, the brush head was cut off and the handle sharpened to a point.

The baskets (below) were made by Judith Stephens, Strathalbyn, South Australia from recycled doona covers. Judith Eco dyed recycled sheets for use in her Workshop at the 2015 TIGHR Conference in Victoria, BC, Canada - the bowl and mat made by one of the workshop participants.



(Toothbrush tool)



Bea Nitschke of the Sunshine Coast Rugcrafters in Beerwah, Queensland made these colourful mats from recycled doona covers.

