

Poco a Poco

Camino de Santiago

2021

fiber, needle-felted wool

36x36 inches (42x42 inches framed)

\$2500

“Poco a Poco” is a woolen tribute to the Camino Aragonés, one section of the medieval pilgrimage route known as the Camino de Santiago, which I walked in 2016. On the Camino Aragonés, I came across a beautiful stone cairn, carefully built on a wildflower-covered embankment. Stacks of rocks, “cairns,” often serve as trail markers in the backcountry of the United States; their universality struck me as I came upon that Spanish cairn. The craftsmanship of the cairn and the patience of its creator(s) brought to mind the Spanish phrase, “poco a poco,” meaning little by little, reminiscent of my own progress toward Santiago.

In “Poco a Poco,” the dramatic light of mornings in the river valley is remembered with the highlighting and shadowing on the cairn in the foreground. From the horizon, periwinkle peaks rise, streaks of snow still present on their crowns, even in the summer heat.

Beyond Cispus Pass

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

20.5x45 inches (24.5x49 inches framed)

\$2400

In interpreting landscapes, I seek not only to create an image but to honor an encounter, and that is especially true in feltings like “Beyond Cispus Pass,” which is drawn from a series of reference images, as well as from my memory of a moment. As I crossed snowfields in my climb up to Cispus Pass in the northern Cascades along the Pacific Crest Trail, it was late in the day, and I was feeling ready to eat dinner and find a place to camp, even while stopping to take photos and admire the scenery. However, after gaining the pass and descending into the Cispus Basin, a high, glacial valley, I found myself so in awe of the world around me that the desire to make camp was long forgotten.

A wide-format felting, “Beyond Cispus Pass” brings to mind the feeling of trying to take in a landscape while passing through it, a time when we consider the human eye’s inadequacy to perceive panoramic views. The viewer finds themselves drawn both to a waterfall in the foreground and, beyond a line of evergreens, a rocky Cascade ridgeline below a pastel-hued sky.

A Host of Golden Poppies

Arizona Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x36 inches (28x40 inches framed)

\$2600

While Arizona is known for its cacti, in the years of a superbloom, the desert is alight with wildflowers that transform the arid land into a living tapestry of colors. In 2019, I hiked along the Arizona Trail just as the last of the winter snowfall was melting. As a result, I was witness to the breathtaking transformation of the desert hills into vibrant wildflower meadows.

In this felting, the muted hues of the distant mountains create a serene backdrop, allowing the radiant California poppies and vivid purple flowers blooming trailside to take center stage. “A Host of Golden Poppies” honors the ephemeral beauty of a superbloom and serves as a reminder of the fleeting moments of magic in the changing of the seasons.

Columbines in the Southern Cascades

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x36 inches (28x40 inches framed)

\$2600

In the sunbaked wilderness of northern California, where the land carries the scars of wildfires, patches of verdant plant communities exist alongside hills of charred and fallen trees. A hiker walking through the region passes from burn zone to green sanctuary to another burn zone in rapid succession. Within this stark landscape, wildflowers emerge as symbols of hope and renewal, flourishing in the presence of precious water sources. They beckon the viewer to look beyond the surface and discover the hidden wonders persisting amidst adversity.

In “Columbines in the Southern Cascades,” vibrant columbines take center stage, their vivid colors commanding attention and their delicate petals capturing the essence of resilience and beauty in unexpected places. The background hints at the rocky terrain and serves as a reminder of the contrasting surroundings that define this region.

Glacier Peak Lily

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x32 inches (28x36 inches framed)

\$2400

The northernmost section of the Pacific Crest Trail is a veritable highlight reel of backcountry vistas. Just beyond the 2500-mile mark, hikers walk a ridgeline from White Pass to Red Pass, with mountain views in all directions and blooming wildflowers in the abbreviated, high-elevation summer.

“Glacier Peak Lily” interprets a moment in the backcountry by focusing on a trailside detail—in this case, a flowering lily in Washington, just 150 miles south of the Canadian border. In the distance, beneath blue-green peaks, clouds hang low in a mountain valley. Flowering plants and leafy vegetation grow trailside in a rainbow of greens. Carefully-wrought details draw out the focus of the felting, a multi-stemmed Columbia lily blooming on an August day.

Orphaned

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x32 inches (28x36 inches framed)

\$2300

In 2021, more than 500 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail were closed due to forest fires, and 194 trail miles burned. In 2023, I walked more than 150 of those miles of trail, an emotional and sensory challenge. In the heart of Lassen Volcanic National Park, where the smell of ash stung my nose and the landscape was burned beyond recognition, I couldn't hold back my tears.

It was this experience that I plan to honor in my incipient “Out of the Ashes” series, for which “Orphaned” is the first installment. As sunset colors the sky above this charred and desolate landscape, the somber remnants of a once-thriving forest are quietly haunting, their blackened husks bearing witness to the destructive force of fire. Against this backdrop of devastation, a lone pine sapling stands as a beacon of hope, not even as tall as two nearby tufts of grass. It is the only living tree in sight, a symbol of tenacity and rebirth.

Keffer Oak

Appalachian Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x24 inches (28x28 inches framed)

\$1600

The Appalachian Trail, dubbed the “long green tunnel” because of the trees that line the treadway, is sometimes suggested to be a monotonous journey through the forest. However, as someone who noticed the individual trees in the wood, I saw the trail as inviting, exciting, and anything but monotonous.

“Keffer Oak” pays homage to the largest oak on the southern Appalachian Trail, a living legend that I had the privilege of encountering during my thru-hike in 2012. In this felting, I depicted the magnificent tree in the way I experienced it, by embracing its massive trunk and looking to the sprawling canopy above. Every fiber used to recreate the tree's gnarled bark, adorned with lichens and furrowed with age, is a heartfelt ode to this venerable sentinel of the trail.

Colorado Sunshine

Colorado Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$690

“Colorado Sunshine” interprets a moment in a grassland along the Colorado Trail. Burned in a wildfire two decades ago, the area is now home to wildflowers and their pollinators. The bright yellow petals of a golden aster in the foreground are juxtaposed against the distant, hazy mountain ridges in the background and a sliver of baby blue sky. On one of the petals, a little ladybug basks in the southwest sunlight. This felting is a celebration of the resilience of nature and the beauty that can emerge from destruction.

Castle Crags Penstemons

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$750

Nearly 1700 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail are in California. By the time thru-hikers reach the northern part of the state, they often develop a case of the “NorCal Blues,” as they miss the Sierras and may be uninspired by the less-challenging terrain. When I instead got to experience the region at the beginning of a 1200-mile section hike, I found beauty all around me. One of my favorite days of hiking in northern California was the day I passed through Castle Crags State Park, where I encountered the flowers I recreated in this felting.

“Castle Crags Penstemons” recalls the clear air of early summer, the crunching sounds of walking along stone trails, and the understated beauty of ridgetop gardens, where bursts of color may be found wherever there is a patch of dirt amid the rocks.

Snoqualmie Fireweed

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$750

Above popular Snoqualmie Pass, the Pacific Crest Trail climbs into one of the most remote wildernesses along the trail, where seemingly endless mountain ridges are seen in all directions and cell phone reception is a distant memory. As I hiked north to Canada, this section felt like a culmination, as if the Pacific Crest Trail had saved its finest moments for last.

In “Snoqualmie Fireweed,” I sought to capture the spirit of a mountainside traverse. The trail winds along the shoulder of towering peaks, hugging the mountains on one side, while the slope falls away toward alpine lakes on the other. Amidst a wildflower meadow, a cluster of fireweed blooms emerges as the focal point. Their pink petals create a striking contrast against the surrounding sea of green.

America's Best Idea

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$750

When the organization that manages the Pacific Crest Trail welcomed hikers back to the trail in 2022, I eagerly packed for a two-month section hike. After the tragedies and isolation of the pandemic, the feelings of freedom and interconnectedness I felt in traversing wide-open mountain ridges and being part of the hiking community again were priceless.

“America's Best Idea” is a heartfelt celebration of the National Park System and the cherished concept of public lands. In early July, I found myself climbing a mountainside dotted with red desert paintbrush, white lewisia, and blue penstemons and looking out at a sea of ridgelines. I reflected on our public lands, the complex history of the land beneath our feet, and the gift of the health and freedom to hike. This felting is that moment, remembered in wool.

Lake Aloha Spirea

Tahoe Rim Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$750

In the awe-inspiring Sierra Nevada, Lake Aloha is as a shimmering jewel among the high-altitude lakes of the Desolation Wilderness. This exquisite alpine lake is beloved by day-hikers, weekend adventurers, and thru-hikers alike. Last summer, during my thru-hike of the Tahoe Rim Trail, I enjoyed a lunch break on the tranquil shore, basking in the glory of the sun-dappled waters and the awe-inspiring spectacle of mountains that appear to rise straight out of the crystal-clear depths.

In “Lake Aloha Spirea,” I celebrated this mountain oasis, where the world seemed to pause while I enjoyed the most picturesque swim of my life. At the water's edge, a clump of vibrant pink mountain spirea grew, a visually delightful contrast to the deep blue water.

Red Oak Leafing Out

Appalachian Trail

2022

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$690

The Appalachian Trail is sometimes called the “long green tunnel” because the tree-clad mountains of the eastern United States offer fewer views than their western counterparts. During my 2012 Appalachian Trail thru-hike, I found the majesty of nature was present not just in striking views but also in the rhythm of the seasons.

“Red Oak Leafing Out” is based on a reference photograph I took in the warming Appalachian springtime. As I walked through the southern forests, signs of spring slowly started appearing and the gray forests began turning green again. I enjoyed the experience of walking north with the springtime, prolonging the season.

Goat Rocks Wilderness

Pacific Crest Trail

2023

fiber, needle-felted wool

24x35 inches (29x40 inches framed)

\$2500

Whereas day hikers seek out trails specifically because of the vistas along them, thru-hikers encounter beautiful places simply because the weeks- or months-long trails they are walking lead them there. When I found myself in the Goat Rocks Wilderness, I was running low on food and needed to hurry to town before closing time. Panoramic views of Mount Saint Helens, Mount Rainier, and Mount Adams stopped me in my tracks.

In “Goat Rocks Wilderness,” I remembered that magnificent day on trail, from the cool, alpine air allowing 360-degree views to the shadows cast by warm sunlight to the snowfields that remained on the peaks, even in August. The Pacific Crest Trail leads into the felting, over the Knifes Edge, and then down to the pass where I eventually retrieved my mail drop.

Dedalera del Primitivo

Camino de Santiago

2018

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$610

“Dedalera del Primitivo” is based on a scene from my journey along the Camino Primitivo in the summer of 2016. Various Camino routes stretch across Spain and much of Europe, and I had the privilege of walking six of them, including the historic route through Galicia. Along the way, I enjoyed the way sunrises colored mountain- and hillsides, the fresh air of hill country, the charm of slate-tile roofs in small mountain towns, and even the bustle of a city inside an ancient Roman wall. It was a peaceful, contemplative walk, and I treasured every day of the journey.

This felting features a stretch of the Camino Primitivo in which the trail leads pilgrims down farm lanes. While mountains rise in the distance, a pilgrim first walks through farm country, where fields of crops and grasses grow. In the foreground, a painted arrow, a “flecha,” points the way to Santiago. The purple-pink blooms of the eponymous dedalera, which English-speakers know as foxglove, made such a beautiful contrast to the yellow arrow that I couldn’t resist recreating the scene in wool.

Friends on Mount Isolation

White Mountains

2018

fiber, needle-felted wool

16x20 inches (19x23 inches framed)

\$560

“Friends on Mount Isolation” captures a memory from my “peakbagging” hike of Mount Isolation in the White Mountains of New Hampshire. In the valley, the day was cloudy and dreary, but as I climbed to the summit I ascended first into the clouds and then above them, and I was able to enjoy a spectacularly undercast day near the beloved Presidential Range. In comparison to those behemoths, 4003-foot-tall Mount Isolation is small and markedly quiet. In fact, I spent an hour or so among the wind-blown krumholtz on the summit alone—save for a few friendly gray jays hoping for trail mix.

This piece is a reflection on the companionship with nature we feel in wild spaces. In the foreground, the sun casts shadows below the rocks that comprise a rugged stone cairn, atop which two gray jays perch. In the middle ground are twisted branches of steadfast spruces and the brilliant reds, oranges, and yellows of distant trees in New England’s valleys. Mid-day clouds are overhead, and the Presidential Range is visible in the distance.