



Representing Western Australia

Peta Korb & Josephine (Jo) Franco

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This artwork was commissioned by Tracey Roberts, Federal Member for Pearce.

Designed by Peta Korb, the project was brought to life through the collaborative efforts of Peta Korb and Josephine (Jo) Franco, resulting in a seamless fusion of styles, materials, and perspectives to create a captivating representation of Western Australia © 2024



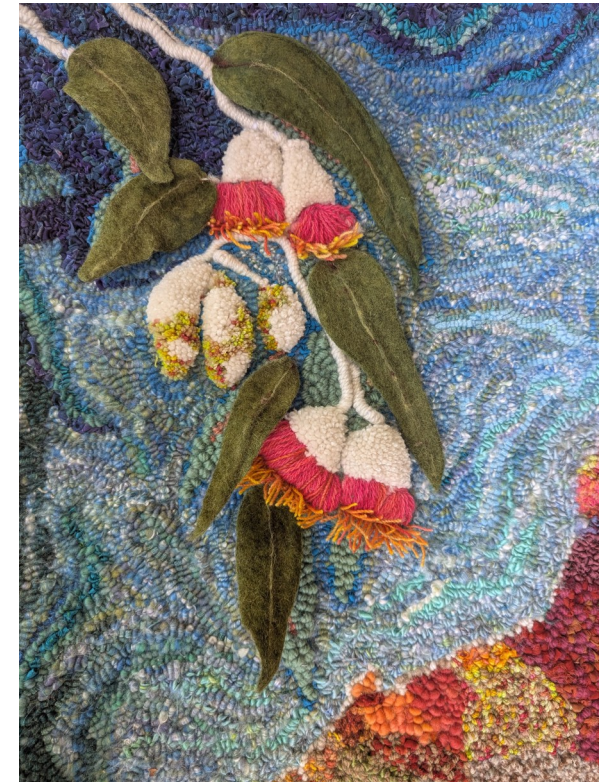
The Vision Behind the Piece: Peta Korb

The piece *Representing Western Australia*, is deeply rooted in my unwavering connection to Western Australia, a place that has shaped my identity and artistic vision. Having been born and raised in this extraordinary land, the inspiration for this work was already ingrained in me. However, it was also essential that the piece reflect not just my connection but also that of Tracey, someone I have known for many years and whose bond with her community runs just as deep.

The vision for this artwork was to create something that evokes warmth, familiarity, and connection; a piece that draws the viewer in, igniting curiosity and a desire to explore its deeper meaning. At its core, it represents the vast and diverse landmass of Western Australia, interwoven with the traditional Aboriginal language areas, paying homage to the history of place and the cultural heritage embedded within it.

Rather than allowing the land to simply exist against a void of ocean, I chose to enrich the background with native flora and fauna, a passion that has long been central to my artistic practice. Integrating species endemic to Western Australia felt like the most natural expression of the state's beauty and identity.

The official state symbols—the Numbat (*Myrmecobius fasciatus*) and the Red and Green Kangaroo Paw (*Anigozanthos manglesii*) take pride of place, complemented by the elegant Silver Princess Gum (*Eucalyptus caesia*) and striking Banksia flowers, each carrying its own story of resilience and connection to the land.





The Vision Behind the Piece: Peta Korb

Beyond Western Australia, I wanted to acknowledge the broader role Tracey plays as a Federal Member of Parliament, representing the electorate of Pearce within the national landscape.

The inclusion of Sturt's Desert Pea (*Swainsona formosa*), South Australia's floral emblem, serves as a subtle yet powerful symbol of interconnectedness.

While it represents South Australia, this striking flower also flourishes across Western Australia and the Northern Territory, a testament to the deep connections that transcend geographical boundaries.

Through this piece, I sought to create more than just an artistic representation; I wanted to weave together history, identity, and the profound ties that bind people to place. It is an invitation to reflect on the richness of Western Australia's natural and cultural heritage while recognizing the broader connections that shape our shared landscape.

From Sketch to Stitch: Crafting the Concept

With a clear vision in mind, the challenge became translating the concept into a tangible piece, ensuring that every element worked harmoniously to convey the story and meaning behind the work. Traditional rug hooking was chosen as the primary technique, a method that not only allowed for rich texture and depth but also carried a sense of tradition and craftsmanship that aligned with the spirit of the piece.

A serendipitous moment occurred early in the process—Tracey had provided an estimated size for the piece, and it just so happened that Jo had been holding onto a much-treasured piece of rug warp – cotton of the ideal weight, reserved for something truly special. It was the perfect size for this project, making it the ideal foundation.

One of the first technical challenges was ensuring that the border lines were drawn straight and aligned with the fabric's grain. This precision was crucial to prevent distortion once the hooking process began, ensuring that the artwork would maintain its intended shape and proportions.

Balancing the representation of Western Australia within the composition was another key consideration. The challenge lay in how to define WA's presence without enclosing it within rigid borders. I wanted to create a sense of inclusion rather than isolation, particularly when representing the traditional Aboriginal language areas, which are not bound by state lines. This required thoughtful composition and integration of elements that would organically define the space rather than confining it.

A particularly intricate aspect was the placement of the Numbat, which would be brought to life as a three-dimensional needle-felted element. Positioning it within the design required careful thought to ensure balance and harmony.

The Numbat's orientation—looking towards Federal Parliament—was intentional, symbolising Tracey's role as the representative for Pearce in the broader national context. Its poised movement also reflects the constant travels Tracey undertakes to fulfill her parliamentary duties.



From Sketch to Stitch: Crafting the Concept



To execute the design with precision, the initial artwork was first drawn to scale on a separate surface matching the size of the backing cloth. The design was then photographed and projected onto the cloth to accurately transfer every detail. This process ensured that the proportions and intricate elements, such as the Aboriginal language areas and natural motifs, remained true to the original vision.

Additionally, certain design elements, such as the Numbat and Sturt's Desert Pea, were created separately and later integrated into the piece. To maintain cohesion, these components had to be meticulously planned, ensuring that they aligned seamlessly when the final piece came together.

Through careful planning, problem-solving, and a deep connection to both the subject and materials, the design evolved into a cohesive and meaningful composition. Each challenge presented an opportunity to refine and reinforce the story behind the work, resulting in a piece that embodies both artistic vision and technical craftsmanship.

The colour palette for the surface design posed a significant creative challenge as Jo aimed to blend over 60 unique colours seamlessly. Instead of using wool fabric which could be dyed into varied shades of one colour, she opted for various fibres, (merino wool, alpaca, spun & unspun yarn) to craft naturally blended transitions. Her goal was to avoid a rigid polka-dot effect creating instead a harmonious flow where one area subtly merged into the next, with no hard lines between language groups.

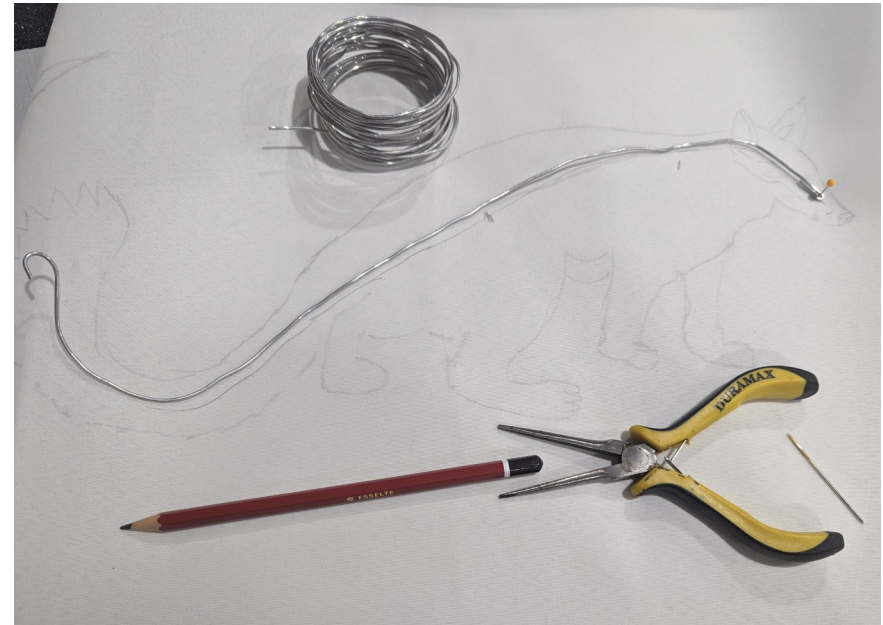
Jo intentionally avoided outlining the language groups to reflect the organic crossover and fluidity of the boundaries. Variegated yarn played a crucial role, offering soft, natural colour shifts that enhanced the overall design. Inspired by the topography of Western Australia Jo drew upon it's vivid natural palette, from the deep greens of the southwest forests to the delicately coloured wildflowers along the central coast, the earthy brown of the central mining regions, and the bold, fiery reds and oranges of the Kimberley. The vibrant aqua of the ocean brought balance and energy, allowing the colours to reflect the spirit of the land itself.



Collaboration in Creation: Peta Korb

While Peta's creative journey with the piece began with the design, her role extended beyond that as she also took on the responsibility of creating the Numbat and Sturt's Desert Peas. The Numbat, a uniquely special animal, was to be mounted onto the shadowed outline of the piece hooked by Jo. To ensure it was securely attached, Peta incorporated wire anchor points within the structure, allowing the Numbat to be firmly stitched to the finished hooked artwork.

As Jo dedicated countless hours to rug hooking the vast details of the design, Peta worked in parallel, using her copy of the design to maintain precise size and shape for seamless integration. Through needle felting techniques and wool fibres, she was able to give the Numbat a sense of lifelike presence, knowing that its soft, tactile appeal would draw viewers in and invite interaction.



For the Sturt's Desert Pea, Peta utilized wool fibres and wet felting techniques to bring the flowers to life.

Initially, the intention was to create only the flowers, but as she began positioning them onto the piece, she felt the need to extend the design by adding trailing leaves, ensuring the Sturt's Desert Pea was represented in its full natural form.



Once Jo completed the hooked base and returned it, Peta took on the final assembly, carefully adding her elements in a way that enhanced the composition without overwhelming it.

Balance and harmony were key considerations in this stage, ensuring that every addition complemented the piece as a whole.

Tracey's preference for the piece to remain as tactile and accessible as possible influenced the final presentation. Instead of traditional framing, the artwork was mounted, allowing viewers to fully engage with its textures.

As the mounting process was integral to incorporating Peta's elements, she undertook the final assembly, leaving the last stages of detailing, such as trimming the Numbat's fur and refining its finer features, until the piece was in its fully completed state.



Through this collaboration, every element came together with thoughtful craftsmanship, reinforcing the depth of storytelling within the piece while maintaining a seamless fusion of techniques and artistic vision.

Collaboration in Creation: Josephine Franco



Jo delved into the rich tapestry of Indigenous languages across Western Australia, mapping their locations and crafting a thoughtful colour palette to represent over 60 unique languages and dialects. The timeless art of rug hooking was employed to sculpt a richly textured, looped surface, drawing upon Jo's expertise as a teacher of this traditional craft. Extensive road journeys across the vast expanse of Western Australia infused her work with an intimate understanding of the regions diverse colours, capturing the essence of each unique landscape. Her creative journey began August 30, 2023, with the first loops meticulously pulled to bring the vision to life.

By August 3, 2024, the intricate work on the State map was complete, and the piece transitioned from the frame to the dining room table. There, the seascape and 3D hooked florals took shape, with the final loops triumphantly pulled on November 30, 2024, making the culmination of this labour of love.



The completed hooked artwork was then entrusted to Peta, who added her exquisite felted pieces. With her finishing touches, the piece was carefully prepared and transformed into a masterpiece ready to be displayed.



Collaboration in Creation: Josephine Franco



The hooked gum leaves took on new depth and beauty with the delicate overlay of felted leaves, while the gumnuts and kangaroo paw were intricately crafted using the Waldoboro rug hooking technique. Collaborating with a textile artist from a different discipline brought a harmonious fusion of styles, elevating the piece in ways Jo appreciated. The interplay of techniques not only complemented but, in this instance, enhanced Jo's work.

Equally rewarding was the creative challenge of representing the locations of Indigenous languages; a journey of artistic exploration and meaningful learning.



The Final Creation:

Representing Western Australia is more than just an artwork — it is a tribute to the heart of Western Australia and the spirit of those who call it home.

Through the careful blending of design, traditional rug hooking, and needle felting, this piece embodies the land's rich heritage, natural beauty, and deep cultural connections.

Every element, from the symbolic representation of Western Australia and its Aboriginal language areas to the Numbat and Sturt's Desert Pea, has been thoughtfully crafted to reflect the resilience and interconnectedness of this vast state.

The collaboration between artists, techniques, and materials mirrors the strength of the communities that shape Western Australia.

At its core, this piece is a reflection of Tracey's dedication., not only to her electorate of Pearce but to the wider Western Australian community she represents. Just as the Numbat looks toward Parliament, this work stands as a testament to her commitment, bridging the past, present, and future of the place she serves.

Representing Western Australia is a celebration of identity, connection, and the enduring ties between people and place.



Peta Korb – Textile Artist



Peta Korb is an award-winning textile artist whose work bridges the worlds of theatre, storytelling, and craftsmanship. With a background in theatrical costume design and special effects makeup, Peta's creative journey has spanned puppet making, world premiere stage productions, ballet, opera, and an international tour with the Moscow Circus.

Beyond her hands-on artistic endeavours, she has shared her expertise as a lecturer in costume design and served as a judge for the Australian Rock Eisteddfod Challenge.

Now celebrated for her innovative use of wool fibres, Peta employs traditional wet and needle felting techniques, blending them with methods from other crafts to create truly one-of-a-kind pieces. Her award-winning 3D sculptures and wearable art have been recognized at prestigious events, including the Sydney Royal Easter Show. Her work has also been featured in various magazines, showcasing her unique approach to textile art and her dedication to preserving and reinterpreting traditional techniques.



As the creative force behind *Country Chicks Creations*, Peta draws deep inspiration from the diverse landscapes and wildlife of Australia. Her work often highlights the country's natural beauty, featuring endangered native species and earthy, organic colour palettes that reflect the Australian environment.



Through her art, Peta invites audiences to explore the delicate balance between nature, heritage, and craftsmanship, transforming wool into sculptures and garments that tell compelling stories of the world around us.

Follow Peta's creative journey and explore her latest works at [Country Chicks Creations.com](https://CountryChicksCreations.com)

Stay connected on social media: Instagram: [@countrychickscreations](https://www.instagram.com/countrychickscreations) Facebook: [Country Chicks Creations](https://www.facebook.com/CountryChicksCreations)

Josephine Franco: Networking Fibre Artists in the South Pacific



Accredited Instructor: McGown (USA)

Member: The International Guild of Handhooking Rugmakers (TIGHR)

Published in Rug Hooking Magazine (USA) Fibre Forum & Embellish (AU)

Facilitator of the Wanneroo Rugmakers group.



Group members felt sad working on my design in greyscale, but as they hooked, came to understand my desire to keep the work in shades of grey to indicate the destruction of war and to elicit the feeling of sadness

This is not the first time Peta and I have collaborated. In 2014 my hooked dress design “Ebb & Flow” was a finalist in the Eco category of Wearable Art Mandurah, WA. Peta designed and created the headdress, as well as being make-up artist for our model. Photographer, Michael Kelly



McGown NoP687 Kashani Hunt hooked by Jo Franco, Western Australia.

Josephine Franco, an Invited artist in “*The Magnificent Bugs in Rugs*” a travelling exhibition, USA & Canada.

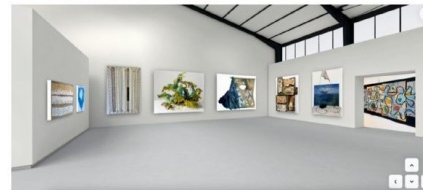
These rug were published in a children’s book, profits from this project go to creating programs for kids to promote rug making to a new generation.

Jo was Founder and Co-Convenor of the 2018 & 2021 online mixed media exhibitions in virtual galleries and creator of the publication,

<https://tinyurl.com/ujh4fsk4>



GLOBAL TEXTILE HUB:
Virtual Exhibitions & More ...



2018 Re-imagined virtual mixed media exhibition;
Textile Tessera No 10 of 12,
Designed & hooked by
Jo Franco , Western Australia



“Handing it on”, Walking with Totems
exhibition, Blender Gallery,
Joondalup, Western Australia



Island of colour designed & hooked using upcycled fabrics by Jo Franco

Tracey Roberts has a deep passion for Western Australian, and commissioned Jo and Peta to create a textile artwork representing Western Australia for her personal collection.

For over a decade, Tracey has been a strong supporter of the Wanneroo Rugmakers Group, where Jo and Peta are active members. During her tenure as Mayor (2011–2022), she played a key role in ensuring that one of two large community-created textile pieces was proudly displayed in the Mayoral chambers.

The Wanneroo Rugmakers Group was established in 2014, with Jo as a driving force behind its mission to engage the community through annual collaborative projects. To date, more than 50 individuals from diverse backgrounds and generations have participated. The group meets at the local library, offering a welcoming and accessible space where members can join in as their schedules and family commitments allow, fostering creativity, connection, and cultural exchange.



2014, Judy Germano teaching Tracey Roberts a rug hooking technique. In the background, Peta & Jo alongside "Market Garden" created by members of the community. This piece now hangs in the Wanneroo Mayoral Chambers.



29 April, 2023, Tracey visiting a typical Saturday morning group meeting. Peta shows her design for "Representing Western Australia" with the help of founding group member Judy Germano.

3rd Dec 2022, celebrating International Rug Hooking Day (Dec 4) and Christmas. Tracey and Pete visited the Wanneroo Rugmakers, at a typical Saturday morning meeting at the Library. This is an open group and many community members visiting the library stop by to learn about the different rug making techniques used in this traditional craft.



(from left-right) Tricia, Judy, Michael and Kath



Tracey with Kath and Persephone, the Group's mascot, designed & hooked by the members of the rug group and turned into a free-standing display by Kath and Michael Smith.

Representing Western Australia has been a deeply meaningful collaboration, reflecting our shared love for this land and the communities it represents. From the initial concept to the countless hours spent rug hooking, needle felting, and assembling the final piece, this journey has been one of creative synergy, problem-solving, and storytelling through craft.

We have worked to weave the landscape, history, and identity of Western Australia into a piece that is both visually striking and rich in meaning. It has been an honour to create an artwork that not only embodies the heart of this land but also the heart of Tracey, who so passionately represents her community.

With great respect, we acknowledge that our work was created on Wadjak Noongar Country, and we pay our deepest respects to the Traditional Custodians of this land, their Elders past, present, and emerging.

This piece stands as a testament to connection — between people, place, and purpose — and we are grateful for the opportunity to bring it to life.

Peta Korb

Josephine (Jo) Franco



Representing Western Australia

Peta Korb & Josephine Franco

2024