

TUFTING BASICS



History

Moose and caribou hair tufting is a traditional Aboriginal art practice. It is typically used to embellish articles of clothing and was primarily used prior to the introduction/availability of beads. The practice originates from northern Alberta and the Northwest Territories.

about tufting



Why moose and caribou hair?

The hair of the moose and caribou is used because the individual hair fibers are hollow which enables them to stand up/puff out for tufting.

Moose and caribou hair is most commonly used as it is a traditional local food resource used by the northern Aboriginal communities.

Reindeer hair fibers are also hollow and although they aren't indigenous to the area, they are sometimes available through Tandy Leather and Fur and can be used as an alternative resource to moose and caribou. Reindeer are abundant in Northern Scandinavia and are not an endangered species.

materials

Caribou hair

Backing material (leather, felt, etc)

Scissors

Thread

Needle (can be glover needle if
working with hide or leather)



1. Thread, Loop and knot your needle. You will want to use a strong and doubled thread for a tight tuft so the hairs are secure. It will be helpful to have an outline of your design on your backing so you know where your tuft will lay. A light pencil line works great.

Bring your thread up through your backing material (back to front) where you want the approximate centre of your tuft, leave about 5cm-10cm of thread tail on the back side. Set aside.



2. Section the desired amount of hair for your tuft, this may take some practice! You want to be sure to get enough hair for the tuft to be dense, but not too large. For a small size, about 1cm - 1.5 cm is a good start.

3. Trim the hair very close to where it is attached to the hide. You may want to gently flip through the edge to remove any short hairs, or fluffly down hairs from your gather. Hold onto your gather of hairs, keep it tightly together and as flush as you can.

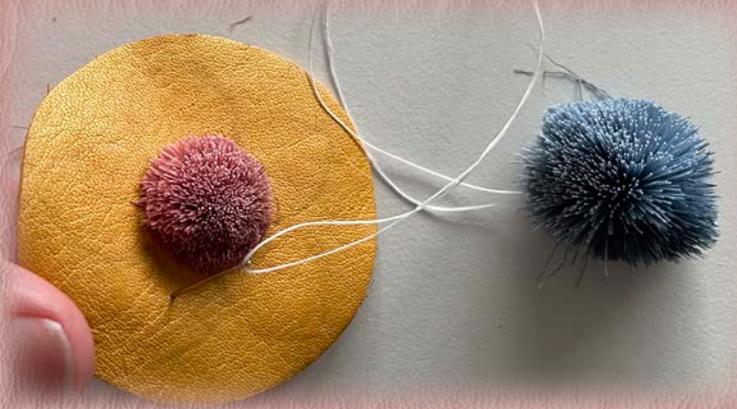


ALTERNATIVE TIP!

You can loop and knot your thread around the caribou hair BEFORE you trim it off the hide, Pull it tight and secure, then trim the hair close to the hide to create a dimensional pompom.

Trim the hairs to the desired shape and then attach to your backing material. See next steps for images of this method.

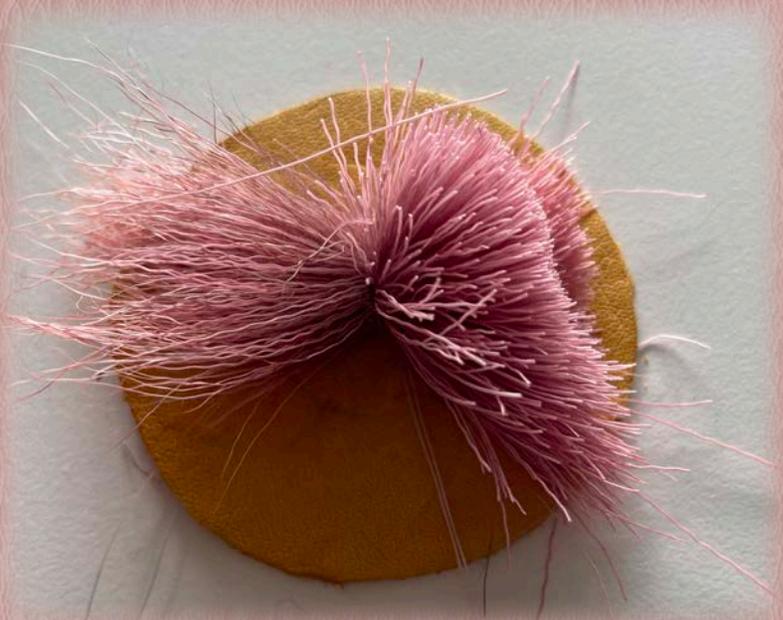




4. While holding the hairs together place the gather onto your backing material, as close to where the thread comes up through the backing. Wrap your thread around the caribou hair, approximate where you want the centre of your tuft to sit. Create a loose single loop.



5. While holding your gather of hair and loose loop secure, poke your needle back down through the backing close (within 1-2mm) to where it was brought up.



6. Once you have decided on your thread position, pull the thread through the backing taught! The hairs will puff out and create an initial tuft.

Secure with a knot on the back with the tail and the pulled through thread.



7. With your tuft in place, begin trimming the edges of the hair to create the desired shape. Circles are a good start, you can also experiment with other pedal shapes, oval, almond etc.



8. Repeat desired tufting method to complete your pattern or design.

