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IN DEPTH • IN TOUCH • INDEPENDENT • SINCE 1889

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Dyeing fiber with indigo is a deeply personal process for Dakshani ‘Daki’ de Alwis, who credits her mother for introducing her to traditional indigo work. *Photo by Arik Meijir*

DYED IN THE WOOL

Story-driven textiles weave connection and place

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Dyeing is all about life. Textile artist and dye maven Dakshani “Daki” de Alwis actually feels it. “It’s alive for me when I’m working with it,” she says of indigo.

The striking blue pigment is made from leaves plucked from a living indigo plant. Before the signature hue emerges and the dye can be used to stain fabric, the leaves undergo many processes. But ultimately, at the inception of indigo is life.

De Alwis and her husband Arik Meijer are excited to offer Wool and the Forest to the world, a business focused on naturally dyed textiles and handcrafted, functional wearable art.

A love of handwork brought them together three years ago, via the social media app Instagram. Somehow, love bridged the gap between Meijer’s home in the Netherlands and the Olympic Peninsula, where de Alwis has lived permanently since 2015.

They met in person in 2019 and married last year. Both are immigrants; Meijer is still navigating a paper trail of documents.

They live outside of Port Townsend on around 10 acres of land, and their three daughters, ages 7, 6, and 18 months old, are homeschooled. “They’re a part of everything we do,” Meijer said.



Patience plays into the dyeing process, as certain hues require longer periods of time. *Photos by Daki de Alwis and Arik Meijer*



DEEPLY PERSONAL

After earning multiple degrees at a university abroad, de Alwis had no intention of becoming a dyer. But retreading the backstory of her childhood in Sri Lanka to her mother’s own relationship to indigo and batik dyeing was transformational.

So, too, was discovering the global colonization of dyeing techniques and indigo.

“Thankfully for me, art and textiles found me,” she said.

De Alwis now wants to bring awareness to the world that indigo dyeing is indeed a traditional South Asian art from. And, she has formed a

very personal and deep connection to her mother through indigo. “People always used what was there,” de Alwis said, of folks on the land.

While she currently sources her indigo from a small organic farm in India, she has her own dye garden in the works. Next year, she

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Two new COVID-19 deaths reported

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Two more residents in Jefferson County have died from COVID-19, according to county health officials.

Six residents have perished from the coronavirus since the start of the pandemic in Jefferson County.

One of those who died was a Jefferson County man in his 60s.

“He did have underlying chronic medical conditions and was unvaccinated,” said Jefferson County Public Health Officer Allison Berry.

The other was a woman in her 50s, also unvaccinated and with underlying medical conditions, Berry said.

“These two are very clearly COVID deaths,” she added. “They died of respiratory failure.”

Jefferson County health officials also reported a total of 749 COVID-19 cases Friday, up from 688 the week before.

A total of 77 residents were still in isolation Friday.

A total of 119 test results were still pending going into the weekend,

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Bar patrons, restaurant diners must show proof of COVID-19 vaccinations

Praise, complaints follow new mandate

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Jefferson and Clallam counties became the first in Washington state to require people patronizing bars or restaurants to show proof of being fully vaccinated against COVID-19.

The new mandate started Saturday.

Jefferson County Public Health Officer Dr. Allison Berry issued a public health order adopting the new requirement Thursday, Sept. 2.

“Indoor bars and restaurants are known to pose a high risk for COVID-19 transmission, as they encourage unmasking of large groups of people indoors,” Berry said in Thursday’s announcement.

“Our goal is to make these safer places to be and to reduce transmission in our communities, allowing our hospitals to keep functioning and our schools to open more safely this fall,” she added.

The new rule will also cover restaurants and bars in Clallam County, where Berry is also the public health officer.

The mandate does not include children under 12 who cannot be vaccinated.

The health order prompted instant outrage on social media,

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