

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #68

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Dear Readers,

during the past three months a row of exhibits, courses and markets were scheduled on which we would have loved to report. We feel just as sorry for the organizers and everybody who would gladly have taken part that the Corona pandemic topsy-turvied anybody's plans, not only those of feltmakers.

But perusing this *filzfun* issue you will realize once again how feltmaking brings people together from all over the world: We introduce two female and one male felt artists from different continents. Annette Quentin-Stoll (page 26ff.) is one of Germany's best felt artists. Practicing a minimalistic lifestyle, she shies away from using a mobile phone and has no website of her own. During his professional career, the American felter Chris Armstrong (page 38 ff.) worked for death row inmates. As a pensioner, he fashions bewitching picture book scenes with the felting needle. Sayaka Ono from Japan (page 32ff.) designs fascinating felt sculptures from white wool. With reports on events that took place in spite of Corona we take you

to the Biennial in the Ukraine (page 14/15), an exhibition on Iceland (page 22/23) and on a felting trip to Hungary. (Page 61). On the pages 16-19 you can see how innovative the members of the German Felt Network (Deutsches Filz-Netzwerk) dealt with the theme (Dis)-Guise.

And because staying at home is said to be the best strategy these days against Covid19 we have a special surprise in store for you: A total of four instructions for your own felt projects – an unusual little bag by Sayako Ono (page 35ff.), color experiments by Ricarda Aßmann (page 45), a needle cushion out of a fairytale (it is even felted with the needle) by Roz Dace and Judy Balchin (Page 52ff.) and a fantastic shawl from silk and needle fleece strips by Elvira Altdorf (page 46ff.)

Please enjoy this issue and we wish you a lot of feltmaking fun!

*With best regards,
your filzfun-Team*

NOTE

For reasons of environment protection, we decided to no longer add the English translation of most articles as a printed supplement to the filzfun issues going abroad, but to offer it as a PDF on our website. The new approach will enable you to find and read selected articles and print them out only when you want to keep them.

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de
The winter issue will be published on
November 27th 2020.
Editorial deadline: September 14th 2020.

Felt and Pottery by Kitty Korver

Kitty Korver shows wall objects made of felt and ceramics in the gallery de Statenhoed in Twello, province Gelderland from September 25th to October 18th 2020. In her technically innovative work the artist often combines felt with brittle, hand-painted porcelain elements which seem to hover over the felted surface.
www.kittykorver.com
www.kunstkringvoorst.nl

Space and Form

Felted images and vessels by Margot Krug can be seen in her show titled »Filz im Raum in Form« (Felt in Space and Form) in the vhs-Bildungszentrum, Nürnberger Straße 32, 91710 Gunzenhausen during office hours. The artist makes her vessels and forms mostly from coarse, mixed or raw wool to give them structure, stability and expression. Upon request, Margot Krug will lead interested parties through the exhibit. Please make an online reservation via mail:
margot.krug@web.de
www.margotkrug.de/vhs/

Perfect Felt Art

Eleven internationally renowned felt artist present objects and images at the premises of the Volkshochschule Neckarsulm, Seestraße 15 as of November 20th to February 2021: Andrea Noeske-Porada, Andrea Uhlmann, Beatriz Schaaf-Giesser, Claudia Capiello, Dagmar Binder, Dagmar Meyer, Lyda Rump, Gabriele Wehrmayer, Renate Maile-Moskowitz, Yvonne Zoberbier and Ulrike Hartrumpf. The curator Ulrike Hartrumpf explains: „ Our aim is to show the versatility of feltmaking which is achieved by different work processes and through a combination with other materials. On top of that we want to invite the public to watch the felted art objects from different perspectives and to find something new in them every moment.« If the Corona Pandemic restrictions allow the opening will be on Friday, November 20th at 7 p.m.
www.vhs-neckarsulm.de
U.Hartrumpf@opos.de

Help for Kyrgyz Feltmakers

The Corona pandemic has hit the Kyrgyz people hard, especially in the Alai and at the Southern bank of the Issyk-Kul. (Sabine Reichert-Kassube has told our readers about her trips to Kyrgyzstan in the *filzfun* issues No. 66 und 67) Kyrgyz felters who also suffer a lot under the dire circumstances do volunteer carework for the sick and infected. During the summer Felt-Kolleg event in the felto Filzwelt Soltau an emergency call from Asel Temiralieva-Meyer reached the German feltmaker Maria Sagurna, who spontaneously collected 150 Euros from the participants. To offer substantial relief more donations are needed, according to the regional Berlin-Brandenburg group of the German Filz-Netzwerk. The German-Kyrgyz Culture Association e.V. has opened an account and kindly asks for financial support: (IBAN DE70 12080000 4102423100, BIC DRES DE FF 120, Purpose: Shardana Corona Spende).
www.dkk-verein.com

Dialogue Between Wool and Metal

After wood and paper – the subjects of the last two exhibitions – this year wool meets metal at the CraftArtFusion project of the Austrian artists group wollmodus. The artworks of 15 artists will be shown twice: from September 30th to October 11th at Galerie Eisenwaren Kamp, Stumpergasse 23/1, Vienna, and during the weekend of November 7th and 8th at the exclusive handicraft market »Kunst im Handwerk« at Perchtoldsdorf Castle in Lower Austria.
www.wollmodus.at/wollkunst
<https://kunstimhandwerk.com>

Quilts – traditional and modern

The Patchwork Gilde Deutschland (Patchwork Guild Germany) presents 40 artful quilts that were chosen by a jury from 117 works for the competition »Tradition bis Moderne XII« (Tradition to Modern XII). Then the show travels to Einbeck, Prague, Helmbrechts,

Mindelheim, Fürstenfeldbruck and further on.
www.patchworkgilde.de
www.steinhuder-museen.de

Textile Market in the tim

For all friends of high quality textile art the annual market in the Staatliches Textil- und Industriemuseum (State Textile and Industrial Museum tim) in Augsburg is a must. On Friday November 20th and Saturday November 21st a total of 65 studios offer individual clothing, hats, home textiles, leather goods, jewelry and much more in the historic halls of the former Augsburg Combed Yarn Spinning Mill. Other presentations and workshops are planned.
www.textilmarkt-im-tim.de

Felters Meeting at Hungary and Online

Spontaneous people might grab the chance to join the CorNit felters meeting from September 6th to 12th at Nagybörzsöny, Hungary. Organizer Corinna Nitschmann engaged Anikó Boros, Bea Németh, Márta Csille, Gabriella Kovács and Judit Pócs as lecturers. Along with the workshops there will be an interesting touristic program. After the meeting at Hungary videos and webinars with the advisors will be available as an online meeting.
<https://blog.cornitfilz.de/cornit-filztreff-in-ungarn-online/>

Creatively Through the Crisis

Felt Art, actions and events in times of the Corona pandemic

From one day to the next the pandemic had upturned all our plans for many months to come. Feltmaking courses, markets and textile art fairs were cancelled and even private meetings were no longer possible for many long weeks. ♡ But many felt enthusiasts and artists

have tried to make the best of the shutdown period. Some have dealt with their worries by making felt art, others let their sense of humour get the better and made funny COVID19-sculptures, trying to wrest a lighter side from the whole mess.

☞ For many felt artists and craftspeople the pandemic turned into an existential crisis: Because they could no longer offer courses or workshops or present their objects on fairs they went without any income for weeks.

☞ On the following pages we would like to share how this state of emergency was dealt with artistically: Felted objects that made uncertainty and worries visible, others were deliberately designed to take away some threat from the virus. Creative as well were many new ideas how exhibits and online courses digitally overcame the restrictions and distance rules.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 10-12

Learning Together Worldwide

Felt lecturers bring people from many countries together in online courses.

Most felting lecturers prefer to sit at the working table together with their students, enjoying the closeness and haptic experience: picking wool together, laying it out, felting it with water and soap and let the students share the sensual magic how loose fibers connect to a dense, full piece of felt. Since this was practically impossible, some of them set out to develop courses online, where they could work with a greater community – i.e. from all over the world!

☞ Below we would like to introduce some of these initiatives, but also many other felt artists have been in contact with the felters' scene via online tutorials in the time of shutdown. Well-known examples are Ricarda Aßmann (see page 42/43) or Pam de Groot. Also, Stephanie Metz conceptualized online formats for her workshops.

Mending Mondays Weekly Online Meetings with Flóra Carlile-Kovács

For 13 long weeks Flóra Carlile-Kovács sat each morning at 10 o'clock (19h German time) in front of her webcam and counselled frustrated felters via a live stream on her Facebook page how to save mishappen projects. »Has it ever happened to you that the silk would not combine with the wool, that parts wouldn't stick together, that edges were uneven and the shrinking factor turned out completely different than previously envisaged?«, wrote the Hungarian-born artist, who lives in the US in her »Mending Mondays«: »Felt projects can be repaired in many ways, and mistakes are often a seedling for new ideas or techniques.«

☞ Over the summer, the »Mending Mondays« paused, but Flóra Carlile-Kovács showed in a three-hour Zoom course how a felted blossom is made. As of September 7th monthly online meetings are planned.

*For further information please contact:
www.florafelts.com
www.facebook.com/floranemez*

Seeds for a New World: Internet Courses with Maria Friese

Maria Friese for example started her online course »Felt moments – Seeds for a new world« already in March. She goes into detail: »So many people worldwide found themselves suddenly isolated in their homes. I asked myself: What can I contribute to nurture some positive thinking, lightness and a sense of global community?«

☞ She combined her feltmaking skills and experience and her new professional idea, i.e. to counsel and accompany people, in online courses that were an immediate success. »My idea was to sort of immerse ourselves in creative moments, made from the power of our own hands, to follow an inner impulse and to create new things – I believe that rising fears, trouble and uncertainties can change into positive wishes for our earth.«

☞ »Felting has a great transformative power. From the fiber chaos we can set up a new order by our determination. I wanted to use this symbolically to also structure our inner selves anew, to transform them. If we become brighter, lighter of mood and more positive this

can also reflect on the world around us. These strategies are like new seeds, full of wonderful intentions for a new world that are allowed to grow and prosper.«

☞ By way of the courses via Zoom people from all over the world suddenly related who had never met each other before. Finally you could identify the face belonging to a facebook account name. The experience of the lockdown weeks has encouraged Maria Friese to offer online 'felt transformation courses' in German, English and French in the future as well. »This is not about complex or new felting techniques. We use felting to encourage people's own transformation processes and offer assistance therein.«

☞ For further information please contact Maria Friese's website:
www.heart-transformation.com

Felting and Embroidering in Front of the Computer: Annemie Koenen teaches online

»On March 15th the Corona virus changed everything«, says Annemie Koenen, whose agenda had been well booked for 2020. But then: »Everything came to a halt overnight. No courses in my workshop or elsewhere, no events in Leiden or Berlin. Also our printing business practically stopped.«

☞ But the cancellations made room for new things, and so Annemie Koenen started her »online adventure«, as she calls it. First she improvised with her iPad, then in her own studio with several cameras and a good images for the Zoom-based workshops for feltmaking and embroidery.

☞ She was quite surprised that teaching online had unexpected advantages: The participants seemed more attentive, time-consuming work was made in peace during the week until the next unit started. When needed, they could always go back to the previous lesson to get a better grip. The best thing about it, Koenen claims, is: »Despite the fact that we couldn't travel we have met people from all over the world, held exchanges and inspired each other – and that from one's own livingroom.« This means a great joy for a passionate teacher like her.

☞ The participants' reaction prompted Annemie Koenen to continue giving online workshops also in the future. Christine Segiet, for one, who has felted a charm and an embroidered bracelet, thinks: »It was so much fun to see so

many international parties, all literally gathering in my workshop.« Dagmar Bettge-Rietz, ever looking forward to the next instalment, changed her working table always on time to host her »home office for creative embroidery«. In the course of the different modules she learnt Tsjiraj- and the so-called prehistoric stitch, chain- und rose-stitch. »It was a time that carried me in a positive way and pleased me enormously«, she resumes.

☞ From Oregon in the US Pat Spark participated in the Zoom workshops and found out that she felt much less stressed than during the usual two- to three-day courses. »I could take a lesson each week, learn a new technique and try it out over the week until the next session«, she explains. »And when I felt isolated during the pandemic with my husband it was ever so nice to see people's faces from all over the world. Many of these I knew already but I know them even better now. I hope for similar courses also in the future.«

☞ Her wish will be granted. Annemie Koenen is determined to teach more online. For all who are not familiar with being taught from a screen she offers a trial hour of wet-felting.

All themes and data please find on her website:

www.wolwerkplaatsmoederaarde.nl

Shop Windows Instead of a Water Tower

Because her scheduled show was cancelled due to Corona Monika Derrix had an unusual idea

»Fenster (Windows)« is the title of an exhibition that was scheduled to take place in the Geldern water tower this spring in the scope of the Kreis Klever KulTourtage, a culture festival. But then, as we all know, came the pandemic and the lockdown: The show that would have hosted 40 artists could not be carried through.

☞ »When windows cannot come to us then we come to them«, decided the show's initiator, the artist Peter Busch. Supported by the newspaper Niederrhein Nachrichten he encouraged shop-, house or flat owners to show the pieces in their windows for two days. This was met with unexpected enthusiasm.

A Forest in the House

Also felt artist Monika Derrix took part: In a shop window of her husband Ludger

Derrix's bookstore »Der Bücherkoffer (A Suitcase full of books)« she draped a white curtain made from five layers of cotton gauze and bio Merino roving in the format 200 cm x 75 cm, decorated with trees shown from all perspectives. »My idea – before Corona – was to take the forest into the house, so it could be seen through the windows«, she says. »For the presentation in the bookstore window I tried to extend the theme to »A window into my workshop.«

A Video with Music

In a five-minute photo-video, accompanied by guitar music of her son Jannis Derrix, Monika Derrix showed the making of a felted sheath for a ball cushion. (This can also be seen on her YouTube channel.) For that purpose the artist arranged tools and materials as well as the finished object in the shop window.

☞ The small, special show helped Monika Derrix a little to overcome the difficult lockdown-time without courses and fairs. On Facebook she wrote under a photo of the event: »In any case it is helpful for my psyche.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 13

Felt Art in Times of the Pandemic

Shows were cancelled, good ideas wanted.

Not only felting courses but also many exhibition fell victim to the protective measures in the first half of 2020. The Internationale Filzkunstausstellung des deutschen Filz-Netzwerks (International Felt Art Exhibit of the German Felt Network) under the motto »(Ver)-kleidung (Dis)-Guise« (see page 16 ff) could not be shown in the Mindelheim Textile Museum and was there was no official opening when it finally was on show in the Pfalzmuseum in Forchheim.

☞ The Filzkollektiv (Felting Collective) around Lyda Rumpp that presented such a successful show on the island of Rügen (see *filzfun* No. 64, Pages 12/13) had to postpone its current event »Raum und Zeit (Space and Time) in the Roman Museum Villa Urbana in Heitersheim until 2021. The exhibit »Behältnis :: Verhältnis« with felt art by Llaura Sünner and pottery

by Barbara Lang in the M6 Farbwerke, Hamburg was cancelled at short notice.

☞ Stephanie Metz's project »InTouch« (see *filzfun* No. 66, Page 18ff.) in the Saisset Museum of the University of Santa Clara, California was stopped earlier than planned. In videos on her YouTube channel the artist gives a vivid impression of the show pieces and their effect on the audience.

<https://www.youtube.com/c/StephanieMetzSculpture>.

PAGES 14–15

Sculptures for the Scythia

Works by Sawatou Mouratidou and Yvonne Zoberbier at the Biennial in the Ukraine

Artists from more than 30 countries showed their works at the Scythia, the 13th International Biennial for Contemporary Textile Art in the Museum of Iwano-Frankiwsk in Western Ukraine. Among them were Sawatou Mouratidou from Vienna and Yvonne Zoberbier from Leipzig with their characteristic felted sculptures.

Privately Organized

The Scythia with its exhibition and symposium has been organized every two years since 1996 by Ludmila Egorova and Andrew Schneider and presents art objects of feltmaking, embroidery, batik, patchwork and quilting, Shibori, applications and many other textile techniques. It is independent of state cultural institutions and »as the first privately organized art event in the Ukraine it is free of any kind of pressures«, as the organizers point out. »The exhibit introduces fresh artists and helps the public to get information about national and international trends. The symposium conveys knowledge about new textile events all over the globe.«

Man and Nature

»Sticking together« is the title of the felted sculpture, Sawatou Mouratidou's contribution. She thematizes the bond between man and nature. »There is an invisible cord that ties us together. We strive for freedom and a meaning in life, but our civilized existence has led to despondency«, explains the artist. »We

forget that we make our future in the ways we act. As long as our fears don't get the upper hand we will always have a choice. Intelligence, self-confidence and responsibility will lead us toward a 'free' life again. In order to get this done, we human beings have to stick together and to fight for a better future.«

A Cultural Female Imprint

»My artistic work has a deep female imprint«, explains Yvonne Zoberbier, whose needle-felted sculpture »Sitzende« (Sitting Female) was on show in the Ukraine. »A continually recurring element of my work is the discussion about man in all his or her facets, faces, bodies, gestures, veiled or unveiled. In a flowing process, inspired by shapes and materials without a preliminary goal or subject, bodies, heads, delicate creatures and gossamer sheaths are born. The untouched impression of white leaves room for interpretation and opens a projected area for one's own thoughts and feelings.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 16-19

Masks, Mimikry and Metamorphosis

The motto „(Ver-)Kleidung« (Dis-Guise) of the International Felt Art Exhibit left a lot of room for individual interpretations.

(Dis)guise: This theme of the international felt exhibit, to which the German Felters Network had invited, gave plenty of room to personal interpretations. The jury had elected approx. 50 works of 44 female artists who create garments or proper costumes.

Not all Tinsel and Glitter

Also concerning plain garments the felt artists play around with the seeming and the real. Petra C. Sommer shows an ethnically elaborated, curl-studded costume with a matching headgear and bag called »Pocahontas«. Some models are perfect for a bride-to-be and/or especially designed as genuine wedding dresses, for example Ingrid Rästa-Thomsen's »Traumkleid« (Dream Dress) with felted-in lace and sequined, »Von wegen Unschuld« (Fat chance for

Innocence) by Birgit Samson, »ER ruft seine Braut« (HE calls his bride) by Angelika Geißler with lavish rose garlands as well as the duo »Kirchlich« (Religion) und »Staatlich« (State) by Katja Hannig-Fischer.

Wood Fairy with Wings

Quite classical, with a narrow skirt and vest, but with an exotic pattern is Anne Jansen's »Giraffe Costume« and Yasmin Groß adorned her green model »Wood Fairy« with a meandering seam with curled fringes and delicate white wings. Less a garment but rather a protecting and warming cover for a new-born is the baby cocoon »Butterfly« made by Gisela Baraib. Out of Carola Zeiger's corset sculpture »Volcano« leap flames made of colored silk licking the neckline.

A Felted Crown

Also fanciful footwear and artsy headgear are on show: the »Filzaffairen« (Felt Affairs) by Heike Kojman and »Chameleon« by Barbara Eichhorn, the wide-brimmed hats »Magic« by Annemie Koenen, the »Krone des Kleinen Königs« (Crown of the Little King) by Liane Schiemann, the red and black »Drachentiefel« (Dragon Boots) by Beate Thierling and the shoes and boots »ÖKOPlus 1« by Barbara Müller, remindful of Indian moccasins. The hat model »Abgetaucht« (Dive down) by Birte Bahde has the shape of a fish with a back fin, and Kerstin Scherr designed a changeable bag with her »Daypack« that can be worn either over the shoulder or as a backpack. ☞ Susanne Breuling with »Harlekin-Mantel« (Harlequin Coat) and Margit Röhm with her costume »Nebel« (Fog) created garments as disguises which can be seen as modern specimen of Häs, a type of ancient allemanic carnival fool costume. Her second exhibit »Gebrochen« (Broken) shows a horned head with a tusk, belonging to a fairy tale creature with greenish wool hair that seems to grow out of a tree.

Classical Masks

Classical, detailed face masks were presented by Beate Bossert (»Venezianische Nacht«; Venetian Nights), Bärbel Helfrich (»Teufel und Engel«; Devil and Angel), Susanne Hantzsch (»Cernunnos«) and Monika Derrix (»Gespräch der Masken«; Dialogue of Masks). The latter shows the dialogue between two translucently felted black masks with the typical beaky noses. In Ulrike Hartrumpf's work »Red Mystique

l« a wig dummy head vanishes almost completely under densely felted-on red wool. You have to take a closer look at Ulrike Wieland's object »Mimikri« to detect the apparition of a human face under the white-dotted pattern on a gray background.

☞ Several felt artists chose animals for their interpretation of the show's motto. In Susanne Schächter-Heil's show case »Kulturaustausch« (Cultural Exchange) sit a brown bear in a white and a polar bear in a brown coat. On the show case, a winged black creature is enthroned. With palpable pleasure Ina Jeromin put sheep in costumes for her »Carnival of Sheep«, e.g. in tiger, strawberry, cheese and ladybug costumes. Silke Koch felted a »Sportlicher Schweinehund« (Sportive Ratfink) with a snout, red gym shorts and a headband. The fascinating shells of sea urchins serve as a motif on Ruth Zenger's graphic-aesthetical »Tiefseekleider« (Deep Sea Dresses).

☞ Quite often one meets the wolf. Kerstin Waizenegger felted a wolf in sheep's clothing, and Claudia Hecker introduces the reverse phenomenon in »Fellwechsel« (Fur Change) depicting a sheep in wolf's clothing. und der Wolf« (... and the wolf) Claudia Blickling called her wolf mask with matching paws.

Butterflies and Cocoons

Several artists were inspired by the world of insects and the metamorphoses of butterflies. In Karen Bruinsma's »Bombyx mori«, an embroidered mature silk moth sits on a white cone with felted-in cocoons. Bettina Selka shows in »Metamorphose« (Metamorphosis) caterpillars and butterflies on a filigree white felted frame. Artistically abstract Katrin Bauerrichter conveys the subject »Cocooning of a Metamorphosis«, and Karin Twelkemeier has beetles crawling over her rough bark-like object »Rinde« (Bark), delicately shaded in white, grey and beige.

☞ Not only people, but also things can be disguised, as Bettina Caspari demonstrated with her »Außenwandbekleidung« (OuterWall Covering), Angelika Bonas with an object called »Wompel«, a felt-covered plunger, Monika Derrix with a toilet roll cover »Traumrolle« (Dream Roll) and Sabine Köhlert with »big knot«, a knot of felted-around cables. Ulrike Wieland's »Bodenverkleidung-Fliese« (Floor Cover Tile) is made of identical squares in grey and black with a rhombic central motif that can be combined in different

patterns to three-dimensional effects.

Vessels in Grey and White

Stefanie Holzgräwe has grouped four cone-shaped vessels in different grey and white shades together under the title »Erstarrt« (Frozen), while Heike Spiekermann combined her grey and black, urn-like vases with »Strandgut« (Jetsam). Christine Rusch entwines two small birch stems with felt and crowns her »Birkenhochzeit« (Birch Wedding) with a quotation about love from the first Corinthian letter in a felt-framed wooden heart. Most likely medieval, richly adorned person indexes, so-called prosopographies, were the inspiration for Sawatou Mouratidou's object »Prosopo 1-3«.

Powerfully Structured

The most delicate felted objects of the entire exhibit come from Barbara Eichhorn: She embedded dried blossoms in translucent, filigree felt in her ruffle-like bowls »Eingekleidet« (Clothed). A direct counterpart are Irene Reinhardt's three steles »Charakterköpfe« (Characteristic Heads) with deftly structured, cubical capitals.

☞ The participants of the Filzbegegnung 2020 in Swabia, Roggenburg, already had occasion to admire the variety of show pieces during a dramatic live show in the darkened threshing-floor of the monastery. They were presented by students of the Ergotherapieschule Dornstadt in black body suits. Now the show, organized by Margit Röhm together with Petra Kunz, Kerstin Waizenegger and Angelika Geißler is scheduled to appear also at other places, as far as the Corona pandemic restriction allow for it.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 20-21

A Question of Perspective

The show »see and notice« by Andrea Noeske-Porada in Baarle-Nassau

A couple of days before the Corona lockdown I went to the High Five Art Gallery in the Dutch city Baarle-Nassau for the opening of the exhibition »see and notice / sehen und wahrnehmen« with textile and paper objects by Andrea

Noeske-Porada. Nobody had the slightest notion that it would be one of the last events of its kind for a long time.

☞ There were three different groups of objects on show:

- »Huber Bags«, an installation started in 2009
- »Hommage to Op Art« with the subject optical illusion (as of 2014) and
- »NoNews«, contemporary paper art

☞ »What exactly do we see here?«, asks Claudia Merx, the laudatory speaker.

»And what do you perceive – on second or third glance? Are seeing and perception identical? Or do we suffer from illusions?«

Briquets from Paper Bags

What do I see? 5 cm x 2.5 cm small »briquets«, arranged on the floor in such a way that I am reminded of Scrabble elements. The artist uses folded, pressed or otherwise compacted paper bags for her »carpet of compressed memories«, a material that I like very much. These paper bags, mostly used for fruit, remind me of my childhood. Still, a closer look brings a feeling of a certain constriction and isolation.

Felted Folded Objects

Claudia Merx calls the group objects »Hommage to Op Art« a »counterpart to this intuitive, experimental installation.« Upon entering the gallery I immediately see the two big, hanging objects, felted and folded in various shades of white. The single take a look at them from below. Each time I get a new perspective under different lighting conditions. An everlasting change in perception keeps me in place. I would love to touch these objects.

☞ Ambling through the gallery I discover smaller felted sculptures in the folding technique that Andrea Noeske-Porada has perfected further. I circle each object to get a similar effect as with the two big sculptures, and I don't get disappointed.

☞ To the gallery's head wall small, black folded paper elements are fastened.

They also beckon me to come closer and to take them in from all sides. Views, opinions and insights change.

Optical Illusions

In a seemingly cubic object made from black felt with an edge length of 55 cm Andrea Noeske-Porada puts the optical illusion to test: Getting closer, you see that it only has three sides.

☞ »In 'NoNews', her latest work, Andrea Noeske-Porada presses lengths of paper together into strands«, Claudia Merx

informs the opening audience. »In a textile sort of way these brittle strands are wound up into huge balls, always seeking to end up in a cubic shape.«

☞ My own perception tells me: Something powerful is going on here. I would like to touch or move this colossal strands ball, or roll it around. It is light despite its size and that tackles my curiosity again. How would it be to unwind it and find out how long the strand is?

☞ »Seeing is a challenge«, Claudia Merx quotes the artist and adds: »Perception is a sensual experience.« My own vision has been sharpened by Andrea Noeske-Porada's successful exhibition. Who has missed it can go on a virtual stroll through the gallery on the artist's website: www.anp-art.com.

SUSANNE HANTZSCH

PAGES 22-23

Disappearing Nature

Felt exhibition in Art Museum Akureyri Iceland

In this joint felt exhibition the Icelandic and Finnish felt artists deal with the exhibition theme and present the versatility of felt. The theme is challenging, it is about the climate change, the influence and the consequences. The landscape disappears. The nature has already transformed, nobody knows what lies ahead for future generations regarding these matters.

☞ The cooperation between the Icelandic and Finnish felt artists started 2017 when we had the »Northern Landscape« felt exhibition in Jämsä Finland. This exhibition was included in the official event calendar of the 100th Independence of Finland.

☞ Last spring Filtti received an invitation from Art Museum Akureyri via felt artist Anna Gunnarsdóttir to join the Icelandic felt artists in the Disappearing Nature exhibition. The Finnish felt works were juried by a Finnish visual arts critic Mr. Hannu Castrén. He selected a collection of 15 felt works.

☞ From Filtti the works of the following felt artists are in the exhibition: Aaltio Leena, Anne-Mari Ohra-aho, Eeva Piesala, Elina Saari, Kikka Jelisejeff. Leena Sipilä, Mari Hämäläinen, Mari Jalava, Marika Halme, Marjo Ritämäki. Rea Pelto-Uotila,

Rutsuko Sakata, Sirpa Mäntylä, Tiina Mikkilä and Tupu Mentu. Participants from Iceland are: Anna Þóra Karlsdóttir, Gerður Guðmundsdóttir, Hanna Pétursdóttir, Heidi Strand, Olga Bergljót Þorleifsdóttir, Sigríður Ólafsdóttir, Sigríður Elfa Sigurðardóttir. The curator is Anna Gunnarsdóttir.

~ The felt works in this exhibition describe widely melting glaciers, floods, cleanness of water, species of fish, birds, mammalia and corals which are threatened by extinction. Also, the effects on forests, trees, plants, berries, seeds and many others. The artists have clearly deeply thought about the situation on the whole globe.

~ The Art Museum arranged the exhibition opening June 6th 2020. The Ambassador of Finland Ann-Sofie Stude made the opening speech together with the Mayor of Akureyri Asthildur Sturludóttir. Felt artist Anna Gunnarsdóttir introduced the works as curator.

~ The exhibition closes September 20th. The Covid-19 prevented the travel for the Finnish felt artist to join the opening.

~ Sirpa Mäntylä, exhibition coordinator for the Finnish Felt association Filtti.

www.filtti.fi

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Annette Quentin-Stoll: Attentive Experimenting

Felt artist Annette Quentin-Stoll and her husband, photographer Robert Quentin enjoy their intentionally minimalistic lifestyle.

Without any doubt Annette Quentin-Stoll is one of the most esteemed felt artists in Germany. Still she almost took a different path, as she remembers: »My very first encounter with felt was in the school gym, where a heap of foam rubber mats for high jump had a felted covering. It looked like it was made of dusty fluffs, and I never liked to touch it.«

~ Also the term »gefíltz werden« (being felted: German expression, approx. being thoroughly checked or harassed, e.g. at borders) for her, who was born in 1978 in Dresden, had only negative connotations: »In the former German Democratic Republic 'being felted' meant that you

were checked to your skin when the officials suspected you had been in contact with the capitalistic enemy abroad.«

~ Had it not been for her art teacher Heidemarie Gerasch, a great admirer of Joseph Beuys, who made student Annette Stoll familiar with felt as an artistic material, the German felters' scene would be much worse off indeed.

Studies of Textile Art

After the final secondary school examination Annette Stoll studied textile art in Schneeberg in the Ore Mountains. In the scope of a lecturers' exchange she had her first, rather discouraging experiences with feltmaking: »The Finnish lecturer Helinä Hoppa didn't speak English or German, and, apart from small amounts of Finnish wool, we were lacking good material.«

~ But by now the young textile artist wanted to learn more: In the fall of 1998 she went for four months to the Finnish University of Joensuu as an exchange student. She was amazed that the felting introduction included a film about the German feltmaking pioneer Katharina Thomas, surprising proof »that also at home in Germany people actually felted.«

Precise Work

She learned the basics and working precision to achieve even edges, exact corners and smooth surfaces and soon started experiments of her own:

»I really liked the seamless felting of buttons, handles and the like.« Finland has remained a place where the artist wants to be from time to time: In 2005 she spent some weeks there as a scholarship holder, accompanied by her husband Robert Quentin. Even today the fascination of the North and the hospitality of former student friends still beckon the couple to travel there.

~ For her final year project as a textile designer Annette Stoll felted animal hand puppets in a Noah's Arc for the protestant primary school in Schneeberg. Some of these figurines could be worn as headgear, and in the course of time she made more hats and toys, bags, jewelry and other »wildly modern accessories«, as she calls them. »My classics from that time are finger puppets such as mice and bags for condoms.« She continually invented new technical variants, combinations and stencil games: »This is what I love most regarding feltmaking.«

Photography and Carpentry

In 2001 she went into freelancing with her company FilzDesign annette stoll and

kept the name also after her marriage to the photographer Robert Quentin in 2002. »My husband is co-author, photographer and layouter for our books. Furthermore he is surfing through life with ease, when he is not behind the camera he loves to work in carpentry«, she tells us. But his contributions don't stop there: Robert Quentin (39) is also a poet, he built a Sauna on their common property in Weinböhla, Saxonia (»out own little piece of Finland«) and bakes bread each week for the entire family. Next to the couple, there are the children Ronja Marie (9), Oskar Mattis (14) and Alice, a 19-year-old cat.

~ At the Schneeberg University that saw itself in the Bauhaus tradition, playful or decorative things were eyed upon a little suspiciously, Annette Quentin-Stoll recalls. »With time and distance from this influence, traditional ornaments got more into my focus.« The fascination for ornaments is best documented in her two gallery books FilzGeschichten (2013) and FilzOrnament (2017).

~ In 2000 she attended the German-speaking felters' meeting for the first time, began to lecture and took part in many competitions and submitted tender offers. »My felt objects were on show in Hungary, France, Lithuania, Finland, Spain, Luxembourg and Italy, just to name a few countries«, she says. In 2003 she won three awards and some works were bought by museums for public collections. The young felt artist rode the crest of success.

A Burnout Dictates a Halt

But this turned out to be almost too much for her, as she tells us. »After Oskar was born I tried to continue the whole workload with development and production of small object series, exhibitions, markets, fairs, tender bids, youth art school and adult education just as before, without any break at all. I could not imagine living without feltmaking, even for a while. But I also wanted to breast-feed fully and engage myself in the parish council, as before. The result was a bad case of burnout syndrome.«

~ For a long time she did not know how to find the right measure and even deliberated »whether I should quit feltmaking forever.« She finally learned to listen to her soul and body and decided to cancel invitations to the US and Argentina, concentrating on regional engagements.

~ Her spacious studio is on their farm premises, where she experiments also with a forest garden. She has a herb

garden as well and is deeply into permaculture »not only with regard to gardening, but to life and economy in general: recycling economy, neighbourly support, up-cycling; we exchange, borrow and give away.

The Aim: Slowing Down

The artist couple is aiming to slow down. »We have always been into Slow Food because we both like to cook and enjoy food«, says Annette Quentin-Stoll. »Also the other areas of life become slower with time.«

☞ She lives without a TV, mobile phone and WLAN – and she has no company website. »But I do have an email address, and upon request I can send my felting course schedule«, she explains. »In the long run we would also like to do without a car.« ☞ Together, Annette Quentin-Stoll und Robert Quentin organize regional joint exhibitions of felt objects and photography, for example around the subjects lumi (Finnish: snow), valo (Finnish: light) and water (see info box). »Our next project will be about traces and shadows«, the artists announce.

Silhouette Ornaments

Annette Quentin-Stoll works more and more conceptually. »The results are images and objects, where the idea is in the foreground and the technique only the means to an end.« So she cuts silhouette ornaments into thin felt, embroiders her work (in wintertime preferably before the fireplace), she combines the wool with shining materials such as glass or metal. She lights the object from behind so that the ornaments become visible. Such is her experience: »Felt re-invents itself continually and there is an endless wealth of technical variants and combinations.«

☞ A special challenge are two felted wall hangings, made to order from the Trinitatis Church in Meißen Zscheila. There is one woven wall hanging which should be supplemented by two felted ones, naturally the latter should harmonize as to motifs, color range and size. »I have further developed my ‚shadow felting technique‘ which allows for delicate contours in pastel colors,« Annette Quentin-Stoll explains.

Wool from Thuringia

For her delicate felt pieces she likes to use Merino wool »albeit with growing unrest, since it is rather problematic to procure the wool from the other side of the globe. For big-size felts and cushions Mountain

Sheep wool is my favorite. At Hof Kornrade I buy wool from a shepherdess from Thuringia, therefore I use an almost regional product. 15 years ago, I felted test patterns from all possible kinds of country sheep breeds from the Saxon Switzerland and the Ore Mountains. The issue was a wool cleaning project to clean smaller, sorted-out amounts of wool. The project didn't materialize, in the end the installation got overridden due to sewage water regulations, deploras Annette Quentin-Stoll. Still, all this had a positive side: A small network of Saxonian feltmakers had been established.

☞ »Looking back on how I felted those last years, you can say I practiced a kind of slow felting«, she muses. »What seemed outwardly important receded into the background, instead I searched my inner self more and more. I take this as a research how attentive felting influences the process. I might have a finished object in mind, but the material often reacts to the contrary. Then I can find out exactly when I can take a turn in a new direction, just like in the old saying: ‚He who doesn't stray falls to the wayside.‘ To put it differently: I have to let go of the fixed idea what should turn out exactly at the right point in time to watch what the material wants to become. „

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 32-34

Sayaka Ono: In a Dialogue with Wool

The Japanese Sayaka Ono's felt art is similar to pottery

Whoever looks at Sayaka Ono's impressive felted sculptures made from white wool finds it hard to believe that the 44-year old has not always been an artist. Instead, she studied law after graduation, and admits: »I had not the slightest idea what art was about.«

☞ Then she left the law and took another turn: to textile education. She learned to weave and dye, and then she studied art. »I would never have thought that this could happen in my life«, she says, still enormously pleased.

Trial and Error

A book kindled her interest in felting, but in the beginning she was not successful. She recalls this period as a time of trial and error. But Sayaka Ono has long overcome such initial difficulties and is now a professional feltmaker. Together with her husband and daughter she lives in Musashimurayama-shi west from Tokyo. It takes her three quarters of an hour to drive to her studio in the third storey of a building. Fair weather offers full sight of Mount Fuji.

☞ In the beginning Sayaka Ono made accessories like bags or hats, »but then I began to follow one form only and made a white sculpture.« She tried out different colors, but found out that the natural hue of the wool best emphasized the form regarding the play of light and shadow. But she still makes hats and bags in her studio (see instruction on page 35 ff), but the sculptural work with white Australian Merino wool pleases her the most.

☞ When making her mostly hollow objects the artist is inspired by shapes, sounds, the breath of nature, water and childhood memories. In some cases she works according to an exact plan, in others she just starts of with a rough sketch without knowing how the finished object will eventually look like.

Experiments with Forms

»In both cases I enter into a dialogue with wool«, says Sayaka Ono. »I try not to force myself on the material. The end result is always a piece that outdoes my expectations.« She only uses her hands, no other tools. »I see wool similar to clay«, she explains, »and I like to experiment with new forms.« As she says, she has adapted her production method to her lifestyle, which has in turn perfected the quality of her work.

Relaxing by Playing Zither

Currently she presents and sells her felted objects in a gallery and sometimes she teaches courses in her studio. But she dreams of being able to show her work all over the world, wishing: »I would like to share the enchantment of wool with many people.«

HELENE WEINOLD

Tutorial: A Little Spiky Bag

The black spikes protruding from this small red bag by Sayaka Ono form an attractive contrast to the soft felt.

Material

- ☞ Merino roving: 80 g in red, 10 g in black
- ☞ Stencil, e.g. from sound insulation or bubble foil: a triangle with an edge length of 30 cm and rounded corners
- ☞ Feltmaking equipment (skidproof mat, bubble foil, soap, water, ball sprinkler, towels, scissors)

Instructions

- 1 First you have to prepare the spikes. Divide the 10 g of black wool into five portions.
- 2 Wet-felt each portion on two-thirds of its length to form spikes. The lower third must remain dry.
- 3 For the body of the bag, divide the 80 g red wool into 6 portions – 3 portions each for the front and the back side. Put the first portion imbricately onto the stencil which rests on a piece of bubble foil, so the wool overlaps the stencil's edges a little.
- 4 Wet the wool with soapy water, press the air out without rubbing, turn around the work piece together with the stencil and turn over the protruding wool close to the stencil's edge.
- 5 Lay out wool onto the free stencil area and wet it.
- 6 Turn the work piece around again and lay out both sides with further two layers of wool (in a 90°-angle to the previous layer), as explained in steps 3 and 4. Then the spikes are connected to the bag.
- 7 Put a spike with its dry end on the desired place and fan out its fibers on the bag's surface.
- 8 After having placed all spikes on the bag in this fashion spray them with some soapy water.

9 Felt the spikes' »feet« cautiously onto the bag.

10 Once the spikes have connected to the bag, continue to felt the bag first by rubbing...

11 ... and then by rolling.

12 As soon as the bag has shrunk so much that the stencil bends, cut the bag open in the upper third of two neighboring edges.

13 Remove the stencil.

14 Felt the inside of the bag by rubbing it firmly.

15 Cut out the holes for the handles with sharp, pointed scissors.

16 Cut the spikes diagonally to the desired length so that they get really pointed. Felt the points and the cutting edges of the handles again briefly.

17 Rinse the finished bag with clear water and put a shot of vinegar into the last rinse. Then tumble-dry the bag or press the water out in a clean towel. Pull it into shape and let it dry in the air.

SAYAKA ONO

PAGES 38–41

Chris Armstrong: Like a Picture Book

Chris Armstrong alias Whippoorwool tells enchanting stories with his needle-felted protagonists.

Two cats, one playing the bandoneon and the other a fiddle beckon a mouse couple to dance; two dogs in Scandinavian-style sweaters try their shaky feet at skating, a turtle solemnly weds a mouse bride and her frog groom. Chris Armstrong's fantastic world is filled with sympathetic, droll creatures – each needle-felted with an unbelievable love for detail. The American artist's pseudonym is »Whippoorwool«, immediately bringing to

mind both the material of his art and the nightjar (whippoorwill) that avid readers know from »Huckleberry Finn« or music lovers from J.J. Cale's »Magnolia«.

☞ »I love stories«, says Armstrong, who lives with his wife, a retired nurse, alternately in Nashville, Tennessee and in a cabin on a creek 50 km away from the city. »I love stories. I love hearing them, seeing them, and telling them. When I was a child our house was filled with books and I spent many happy hours absorbed in old illustrated children's books. The images are still etched in my mind.« He himself tells stories with his needle-felted work that seem to have sprung directly from Kenneth Grahame's classic »The Wind in the Willows« – some of his little critters, as he tenderly calls them, are indeed remindful of Toad or Badger.

A Trying Professional Career

Yet Armstrong's professional career – he is now 63 – was anything but fairytale-like. He used to work as a Federal defense investigator. For 20 years, he worked on behalf of Tennessee Death Row inmates in their final appeals: »My job was to find information that would compel the State to halt their execution.« Sometimes he succeeded, at other times not. While the job was very rewarding and interesting, the emotional and time commitment turned out to be very stressful. In 2003, 10 years into the job, he took some time off »to recharge«, as he puts it.

Figurines for the School Fair

During his time off he got engaged at his daughter's Waldorf school, where parents were supposed to contribute to the event. The handwork teacher, a personal friend from Germany, taught Chris Armstrong the needle-felting basics. His first creation was a tiny wizard, »and all the ladies made a great fuss over it.« So he made a quail, which was greeted with equal enthusiasm. Within a few days, he had needle-felted more animals, which then found their way into a local newspaper article. »Children and adults really liked what I did«, he remembers, »and I liked to see their reaction. It was really great fun.« But then Armstrong resumed his work and put the felting needle aside for another ten years.

Batts or Fleece instead of Roving

Only as he became a pensioner, he put the needle up again in 2013 and devoted himself to the craft, becoming more and more skilled. »I was lucky to work with

batts instead of roving from the first day on«, he explains. »The batts responded quickly to the needle. Basic shaping and connecting one piece to another became intuitive in my first session. It gave me the confidence to keep making items rather than struggling to cajole some slippery roving into a shape.»

☞ Later he learned about the various characteristics of the wool and eventually to use roving. »But I always tell beginners to start with batting.»

☞ When making a chair for one of his figurines he began to bend floral wire for support, and so found a wealth of new possibilities to re-enact his stories. »I've made boats, cars, trees, baby carriages, and furniture for my critters. I also decided early on to make sculptures rather than toys.» To create animals that should withstand the rough handling through children he considered trying and sometimes outright discouraging.

☞ Further he found out that all felted objects always turned out differently than he had originally planned. »When a piece is in progress, I always stop for the day when I know what I'm going to do next. When I don't know what to do next, the piece is finished, and I go on to the next item on one of my endless lists.»

Work at the Kitchen Table

Usually, Chris Armstrong's preferred working space is the kitchen table, but he carries material and tools in a big, durable bag wherever he goes, needle-felting on any old table, his lap or on the screen porch listening to the creek and the hummingbirds at their feeder.

☞ »At first I make the heads and then I work on their facial expressions«, he describes his way of working. »Then I needle the bodies and fasten the heads. I make clothing on my foam pad with a multiple needle tool in the same patterns that a tailor would. I peel off the clothes and dress them before wiring their feet to a wire base. I cover the base with sheets of wool, or rocks and grass, and the like.»

☞ The finished pieces are stored in big plastic boxes. He is always surprised by how many have actually accumulated when he travels to fairs and markets. Armstrong prefers to sell his pieces face to face, and only to people at craft fairs. This is because he likes to see his clients' reactions, and he enjoys meeting people and talking to them. Everyone, he says, sees their individual interpretation of these scenarios and many are nostalgic about stories from their own childhood. »When people arrive in my booth and

look around, I can see them relax their shoulders and smile, which is very gratifying. There's plenty of angst to go around these days, and I'm happy to give people a time out.«

Best of Show

Not only the ladies attending the fairs consider the felted scenarios a hit, also organizers and promoters have gotten wise about this gem of a needle-felt artist: In the fall of 2019 he was awarded »Best of Show« at the Kentucky Festival of the Arts.

☞ The most important thing for Chris Armstrong is to tell stories. »When I tell a story, I try to make it better every time I tell it, whether it's true or not. That's what keeps life interesting and engaging and fun.» And he adds so convincingly: »That's my story!«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 42-43

KRASS Behind the Levee

A year ago, the studio collective KRASS (in german: incredible, crass) comprising Ricarda Aßmann, Kornelia Sswat-Mollwitz and Hans König was founded in the heart of East Friesland.

Many feltmakers will still recall the art hall off the JungeForumKunst in Siegburg, where Ricarda Aßmann used to have her felt studio for years and where she organized a well-known textile show called »FrauenZimmer« in 2017. The art hall has been torn down in the meantime and Ricarda Aßmann moved farther north. In the Krummhörn, or more precisely in Pewsum, in the middle of East Friesland she now works in the artists' collective KRASS. Its name is an abbreviation of the three artists: Hans König, Ricarda Aßmann and Kornelia Sswat-Mollwitz.

☞ When tourists or owners of holiday homes are asked why they spend as much time as possible in this region they likely say in unison: »Because of the light, the vastness of the horizon and the beneficial quiet«, followed by a hymn to the local mentality, since the people there are rooted, calm, friendly and helpful.

☞ Once you mention the fishermen's villages or the much-liked islands of East Friesland you are met with a desirous

sigh. More and more creative people and handicraft artists are drawn to the Krummhörn these days. In each village you can find painters, potters and wood workshops, textile studios and galleries – and now the studio KRASS as well with its fine offers around creative relaxation.

A Feltmaker's Work-Life-Balance

In the premises at Pewsum a wide range of textile courses are on offer. »We have created a place where felt and textile enthusiasts can learn complex techniques, either individually or in groups in a relaxed working atmosphere; international teachers can be met and everybody can develop their own ideas further under a skilled tutelage,« says Ricarda Aßmann. »It is charming that interested parties can book a course individually according to their own time table and spend a family holiday on the coast at the same time.«

☞ Aßmann and Sswat-Mollwitz, both artists and certified felt designers, have considerable expertise in their work around wool, silk and dyeing processes. They love their laboratories most, where they can experiment with all kinds of materials, often using unusual methods to achieve their goals.

Put in the Right Perspective

A further bonus with regard to this »art point« is the collaboration with Hans König, a photographer and journalist. He offers photo courses for artists and shows them how to put their work in the best light digitally. And not only that, also basics for image processing, a range of use for print, web and social media, legal bases for the right of use for photos etc. guarantee the participants new skills and qualifications, for example application procedures for fairs and exhibitions. »In my courses you get the opportunity to test yourself out in photography under skilled guidance, but you also get valuable advice for a successful a web presentation - hardly an artist who can do without it these days. Moreover, all workshops take the individual requirements of the participants into consideration,« Hans König explains.

☞ The COVID 19 pandemic brought uncalled-for quiet for the studio members. From one day to the next all activities had to stop and any kind of teaching was made impossible. Yet there is no standstill at KRASS: Aßmann and König are breaking new ground. With the production of online

tutorials together with the Norwegian felt designer Tone Tvedt and the graphic designer Magdalena Reclowicz the curiosity of interested parties will be more than satisfied. Three PDF instructions have been published until now and can be mail-ordered under info@filzfrau.de

☞ Now there are courses at KRASS again, naturally under strict hygiene and distance rules. This means only very small groups or single individuals are allowed. For a relaxed holiday behind the levee you will receive additional privileged information by the three creative artists.

SARAH PODRANSKY

PAGE 44

Effects from the Color Laboratory

Ricarda Abmann experiments with print and painting techniques

Dyeing felt is quite an extensive field, and besides the much-loved plant prints there are many possibilities to change its color. You don't need an explicit talent for painting or drawing, but you should like experiments.

Clamp or Bind

To print or to paint on felt requires a different handling than, for example, the gathering, binding and dipping of the Japanese shibori technique, since its sheer volume resists fine pleats and gatherings. It is highly suitable for reserve technique though, where through clamping and binding of single areas with different means and the subsequent dipping in several color baths beautiful organic or precisely contoured geometrical colored parts or patterns can be achieved.

☞ Screen printing is a further possibility for surface dyeing, either with a (very expensive) silk screen frame, a stencil, a spreading knife and pastose textile color or a self-made, less costly alternative. Against general opinion that the effects dye has on felt always looks washed-out, in this way you can print finest lines and exact patterns. The only condition would be to use a flat piece of felt upon which the silk screen frame can rest firmly.

Household Stamps

It is a lot more fun to mottle or print surfaces, fabrics or finished felt objects in part or print them freely with self-made stamps, rolls or other utensils. But pay attention: If you print on pongé silk to felt it in later, the pattern will not come out clearly. The best way is to use silk chiffon that doesn't felt in with fine bubbles, but sits rather smoothly on the wool. Or you decorate finished objects like bowls, sets or bags with a later printed-on eyecatcher.

☞ Almost any household item can be turned into a printing tool. This is cheap and a lot of fun for small children. For printing almost all currently available textile colors or a mixture of acrylic color and a textile medium can be put to use. ☞ I have developed a new technique of water-coloring felt (see instruction to the right) which is ideal for working with children. Water colors are needed, which are no longer expensive.

RICARDA ASSMANN
www.filzfrau.de

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Tutorial: Water-Coloring on Felt

Material

- ☞ Felt, white
- ☞ Water Colors (in tubes, paint boxes or water color pencils)
- ☞ Water-soluble pastel crayons (e.g. Neocolor)
- ☞ A brush and water
- ☞ Textile medium of any brand

1 Mix a small amount of water and the textile medium in a small cup. Sketch the motives roughly with water-soluble pastel crayons onto a white piece of felt.

2 Water the colors applied with a soft brush and the water-medium mixture carefully. Immediately, the colors seem to blur, the result is a color mix. If the coloring is deemed too pale, intensify it further with crayons.

3 Afterwards give the motif contour and precision with the water color pencils and paint the desired details: Either dip the crayon into the water-medium mix and paint lines onto the felt directly and soften it somehow with the

brush and the water-medium mix. Even writing can thus be achieved.

4 Iron the felt after it has dried, thereby fixing the textile medium.

TUTORIAL: RICARDA ASSMANN

PAGES 46-51

Reversible Shawl in Nuno Technique

Elvira Altdorf's extravagant reversible shawl is made of finest needle fleece and pongé silk and can be worn as a stole-vest as well.

Material

- ☞ Pongé silk, 20 g/m, 0.45 m x 2.40 m, in petrol blue
- ☞ This silk is delicate and light, with a noble sheen and highly suitable for nuno felting.
- ☞ Needle fleece Merino FLYFEL® from super-fine Merino wool (19.5 mic) in emerald, light green and off-white. The needle fleece is made from pure new wool of Australian Merino sheep. It is needled together to form a thin, very even fleece with ideal feltmaking characteristics. It is dyed with high quality colors according to the Oeko-Tex® Standard 100 criteria.
- ☞ 1 piece bubble foil, approx. 70 cm x 260 cm
- ☞ 1 piece protection foil for covering, same size as the bubble foil piece
- ☞ 2 rubber foam rolling pins
- ☞ 3 cords to tie the fulling roll
- ☞ Soap, soapy water, ball sprinkler
- ☞ Fulling mat
- ☞ Palm washboard or »felting mouse«
- ☞ Vinegar water
- ☞ Towel
- ☞ Ruler or tailor's cubit (a professional tool to measure the length of fabrics)
- ☞ Roll cutter and cutting mat to cut the needle fleece strips. The strips can also be cut with scissors, but using a roll cutter is easier. This applies also to already finished pieces of felt.

Pattern Test

The felt's shrinking factor (SF) is calculated with the help of a pattern test. Prepare a 45 cm x 50 cm piece of Pongé silk 05 without selvage and 8 strips of

needle fleece 3.5 cm x 60 cm each. Lay them out according to the illustration and proceed felting by following the instructions.

∞ SF (shrinking factor) in height
 $45 \times 34 = 1.3235$

∞ SF (shrinking factor) in width
 $50 : 38 = 1.3157$

∞ End size of the shawl:
34 cm x 180 cm

∞ Initial size:

Height 45 cm : 1.3235 (SF) = 34 cm

Width 240 cm : 1.3157 (SF) = 180 cm

Instructions Preparation

First cut the silk out 0.45 m x 2.40 m and wash out the starch, if necessary. Then iron the fabric. Cut away the selvage. The open edges don't have to be neatened. Cut away single loose silk threads from the edges.

∞ Cut the needle fleece strips in the different colors 3.5 cm x 60 cm each with a roll cutter, using a ruler or tailor's cubit on the cutting mat.

∞ Cut out the bubble foil and protection foil in equal size. Have two foam rubber rolling pins and the three cords handy. Prepare the soapy water and vinegar water.

Lay Out the Needle Fleece Strips

1 Put the bubble foil piece (approx. 0.70 x 2.60 m), bubbles downward onto the working mat. Lay the silk (without selvage) out smoothly on the foil.

2 Place the already cut wool fleece strips in the desired color combination each at a gap of 3.5 to 4 cm parallel to the narrow sides onto the silk.

3 The fringes can be laid over the silk in different lengths. Who wants to work especially accurate should measure the distances exactly. Cover the edges on both narrow sides with a fleece strip. You can leave a bit free space at the end, then the protruding silk curls up when it shrinks and you get a small ruffled edge.

4 When the silk surface is covered with the wool fleece strips and the laid-out color pattern is to your liking, wet the surface with the ball sprinkler. Hold the head of the ball sprinkler just above the fleece strips and move the nozzle slightly to the left and to the right: So the strips get evenly wet.

5 Using this method you don't put on too much water, so the woolen strips don't swim away across the silk surface nor do they shift position.

6 The whole moistened surface is covered with protection foil, so the wool fleece strips stay exactly in place.

7 Spray some soapy water onto the whole protection foil. Rub your hands with soap so the foil doesn't stick to your hands.

8 Now press the foil onto the wet surface very, very carefully. The foil gets sucked to the wet surface of the wool/silk piece, so that water and the resulting air bubbles distribute and water runs out from the foil's edges.

∞ Attention! Do not rub across the surface or move your hands from the inside to the outside, simply press the whole item ever so slightly downwards. Only when air and water are evenly distributed you can start to work the piece with soapy hands, minimal pressure and slight, circular movements. Continue this motion for some minutes until the strips are firmly in place and you get the feeling that the felting process between wool and silk has started. This step can be carried out longer to ensure that the wool fleece strips do not shift and the wool ends penetrate the silk.

9 Put the rubber foam pin at the end of the foil and roll the whole thing up carefully and slowly, yet tight. With the back of four fingers (index to pinkie) smooth out the surplus water/air gently from the inside to the outside.

10 Roll up the end of the shawl really carefully, since there the surplus water drips out like a little flood.

11 Tie the whole roll with the cords and close them with loops, so they can be easily loosened. Now you can let the surplus water simply run out by holding the roll upright over a bowl or sink.

12 Put the roll back on the table and roll it 200 times from the palms to your elbow.

13 Stand the roll upright and lay it onto the working mat on its right side. The end of the foil should be placed in such a manner that it lies at the beginning of the mat. Then open up

the cords and roll out a short piece of the bubble and protection foil. Simultaneously put on the second rubber foam rolling pin.

14 Wind the whole working piece immediately around the second rubber foam pin. Be careful - don't lift the protection foil or the shawl by any means. The wool ends should penetrate the silk and connect at the backside by felting. Tie the roll again and roll it 200 times. Stand it upright, lay it down to the right onto the working mat. Open the cords, roll out a small piece of bubble foil, wind everything up again with the second foam rubber pin and re-tie it. Roll it 200 times.

15 Put the roll onto the working mat on one end, lay it to the right and loosen the cords. Now you work without the pins. The beginning of the bubble foil is wound into a thin roll and the entire shawl is wrapped up with the bubble foil.

16 All is tied up again with the cords and wrapped into two thirds of a moistened towel: So, the whole project remains well in place when being rolled on the working mat. Roll everything a 100 times under slight pressure.

17 Repeat steps 16 and 17 from each side at least 4 times until the silk fabric starts to ruffle. Don't worry: You cannot roll often enough, the longer you keep at it, the better the fleece will mix with the silk, and you get no so-called »noses« felted into the fringes.

18 The beginning of the bubble foil containing the fulling piece is wrapped up loosely like a sweet. Then let the whole item drop slightly onto the fulling mat approx. 100 times (don't throw it with any force!) until both foils loosen themselves from the shawl.

19 First the bubble foil, then the protection foil become loose.

20 As soon as the protective foil has become loose, drop the felted-on shawl about a 100 times onto the fulling mat, then begin to knead with light pressure. It is important to treat the shawl, its edges and fringes after the brief kneading, so nothing felts together that is not supposed to.

21 Then pull the shawl, the strips and fringes carefully into form to get an exact, even felted structure.

22 Continue to rub, press and knead the shawl on the fulling mat. Here each feltmaker acts differently. You can also full the shawl in a smooth kitchen towel. Lay the piece out completely from time to time and smooth the edges and strips, again to avoid parts felting together that shouldn't.

23 Rinse the shawl with lukewarm water until there is no soap residue left. Then put it into the vinegar bath for a couple of minutes. In order to get rid of all the water tumble-dry the shawl or press the water out in a towel.

24 Now the shawl gets its individual look by stretching, pulling or stretching...

25 ... and rubbing the felted surface with the fulling pin or »felt mouse«.

26 If you want to have the fringes exactly parallel with a cut edge, cut the ends with the roller cutter.

27 Now iron the shawl, this makes for a beautiful, smooth surface. But working on it with the fulling pin is just as well. Each felt/silk shawl is a unique item.

ELVIRA ALTDORF
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PAGES 52-55

Small World Pincushion

A mini landscape pincushion is a great way to store your needles and pins. Part of the fun is hunting for containers. There is no need to spend lots of money. We have passed many a pleasant hour wandering around junk shops looking for the perfect pot. You can use up wool scraps, yarn balls and cheaper core wool to create the inner base.

Material

- ~ Template for size and shape
- ~ Foam pad
- ~ Felting needles: 40 triangle, 40 twisted
- ~ Five needle tool
- ~ Core wool
- ~ Yarn
- ~ Carded coarse wool: light green, turquoise, ivory light yellow
- ~ Coarse wool: ivory, orange, light green, grass green
- ~ Merino wool. small amounts of black for the window and sheep; dark blue for the tower door
- ~ Ceramic container
- ~ 10 cm length of 0,9 mm (19 Gauge) cotton-covered wire
- ~ Brown felt-tip pen
- ~ Wire cutters
- ~ Embroidery scissors
- ~ Strong clear glue
- ~ Bradawl

Tutorial

1 Use core wool wrapped in yarn as a firm base to fit snugly inside your container. Glue it in place by smearing the inside of the cup with glue.

2 Place a thick layer of carded wool over the top. Needle deeply and evenly into the base using the 40 triangle needle.

3 Continue to felt the surface with a five-needle tool until it becomes firm, then work over the surface with the twisted needle an angle to tuck away any stray fibers.

Tip

Needle felt the core until it is really firm. If it is too soft your pins and needles will sink into the fluffy wool never to be found again!

4 For the path, needle a length of orange wool using the 40 triangle needle. Smooth the surface with the twisted needle.

5 For the tower, needle felt an ivory cylinder and orange cone using the template as a guide.

6 Needle the outline of the door with a thin strand of Merino wool.

7 Fill in with more fibers, twirling them around the tip of the needle bevor stabbing them into the surface.

8 Outline the window with black Merino wool and fill in the same way.

9 Glue and then needle the roof to the tower to the hill. Needle around the tower edge to fix it firmly.

10 Refer to the templates and needle felt a few different sized trees and bushes, leaving some loose fibers for attaching.

11 Arrange them around the tower and needle them into the hill.

12 Needle felt some rounded tree tops.

13 Cut and color two 5 cm lengths of wire with the felt-tip pen. Make a hole in each tree top with the bradawl and insert glued wires.

14 Use the bradawl to make two holes in the hill behind the trees and bushes. Dip the tree trunks in glue and insert them into the holes.

15 Add a few small bushes here and there to fill in any spaces and balance the design.

16 Needle the sheep onto the hill with small mounds of ivory wool.

17 Add a few fibers of black Merino wool to the tip of each one.

18 Insert your pins.

ROZ DACE & JUDY BALCHIN
Extract from the book «Needle Felting for Beginners», ISBN 978-1-78221-734-3, with courtesy of Search Press Limited.

PAGES 56-57

Franzi – A Cuddly Sheep

Gabriele Schilcher made the wool of many different sheep brands into a special carpet.

Under the title »Wolle statt Schokolade« (Wool instead of chocolates) the *filzfun* issue No. 63 (3/2019) presented the idea of the yarn spinner Doreen Böhme

to fill Christmas calendars with the wool of different sheep. I was enthusiastic and really lucky to be able to purchase the last available calendar.

~ In the Advent season my family gathered each morning in my studio, each eyeing the sachets curiously, admiring the photograph of each the respective sheep and together we read the pertaining information. This ritual gave us a lot of pleasure, and we all agreed to make something special out of the different kinds of wool.

~ As a biologist committed to the preservation of nature and animals it was important to me to pass on the idea of a multispecies variety; as a felt artist I took up the challenge to make these wild, rough pieces of wool into a special object. I am a Montessori teacher and so I wanted to ensure the participation of the curious, alert kids of our little alternative school in the sunny south of Austria. For three years now the kids and me have shared an enthusiasm for this wonderful material wool, for nature and the knowledge that came by former generations.

Wool of 27 different kinds of sheep

During the long weeks spent in considerable isolation due to the pandemic I felted a »Feel Well«-carpet from 24 braids of carded wool. This carpet forms the body of Franzi, the »Feel Well« sheep. To be precise, 27 kinds of wool were finally used, since three further wool brands were felted into Franzi's mane, her head and the carpet's background. The background is made from Tyrolese Steinschaf wool batts, it turned out to be the ideal choice for the wool's wild, felt-happy quality.

~ I shaped curls from the different samples. The different textures could clearly be felt when I laid out the wool: short- or long-fibered, kinky, kempy, interspersed with coarse hair – you simply have to experienced sensually, it cannot be explained in words!

~ Also the feltmaking process turned out to be a real challenge. Some curls seemed to completely resist the water, and it took some time until they were thoroughly wet and felted well. Afterwards I embroidered the tips of the curls in relief technique in order to further emphasize the invitation to »touching and feeling«.

A Head to Take Off

Initially I wanted to fix Franzi's head onto the carpet. But during the weeks when the schools were closed because

of Covid 19 I maintained mail contact with the children together with Franzi and told them about my work with funny photos and little stories. The creature sort of developed her own personality and became an ideal communication partner. Therefore, I decided to fix the head only with Velcro strips so it can be taken away anytime.

~ Since the special characteristics of the different kinds of wool are no longer detectable on finished objects I invented the game »Sheep Guessing« from wool samples, photos and exciting, entertaining texts. I very much wanted to familiarize the children with the many existing sheep brands in a playful manner.

~ I searched the Internet for suitable texts. Who knows that there are sheep with blue tongues (Rauwolliges Pommersches Landschaf / Coarse-Wool Pommern Country Sheep) or sheep with up to 6 horns (Jakobsschaf / Jacob Sheep), that Suffolk Sheep rams can weigh up to 200 kg while the small Quessamt rams are featherweights with just 20 kg? And nobody would have guessed that the latter like to bleat aloud and wriggle a lot during shearing? My own enthusiasm grew with each such discovery.

~ When the pandemic situation somewhat loosened up in Austria I tried out both carpet and game with the school children during our happy reunion. The »Feel-Well« sheep Franzi won the hearts of the Primaria 1 children at once, and together we have looked for the many different sheep on the carpet.

A Shearing Video

The Corona restrictions destroyed our plans to be present at a shearing, but we got help. One of our teachers, who is a biological farmer, took a video of the shearing of his Krainer Steinschafe (Krainer Stone Sheep). He brought us freshly shorn Zackelsheep wool to smell and feel it, and also washed wool so the children could try their hand at roving. From the calendar waste material the children made a whole flock, where experts could easily make out Scottish Blackface, Suffolk, brown Merino- and some other breeds.

GABRIELE SCHILCHER

PAGES 58-60

Rhön Sheep

History

The Rhön Sheep (named after a mountain area in the middle of Germany) was first mentioned in 1846, and in this report, there are traces of this breed that go back as far as the 16th century. Thus, it is one of the oldest German sheep breeds. Since the Rhön used to be an isolated area then and the Rhön Sheep stands out due to its unique coloring this statement is quite believable. The first depictions of these sheep show a type that still can be found in contemporary breeds.

~ The Rhön Sheep is said to have a very fine-tasting meat, the delicacy of which made the animal very popular in France where it was called mouton de la reine (the Queen's sheep).

~ As of the second half of the 19th century the Rhön Sheep, like so many others, fell victim to the steady increase in wool imports. Another blow for the breed was that France limited sheep meat imports from 1878 on. And last but not least agricultural knowledge developed, so that light soils were made to yield better crops and the poor sheep soils were now ploughed and the pastures were turned into fields.

~ Another low was the division of Germany after the Second World War, which tore the main breeding areas Bavaria, Hessen and Thuringia apart. After more turbulences in the 1960ies and -70ies the breed sailed in calmer waters. 1991 the Rhönschaf was declared endangered domestic animal of the year by the GEH (Society for the Keeping of Ancient and Endangered Domestic Animal Breeds). Today the total amount is a five-digit matter.

Description

The Rhön Sheep is of middle height or tall and only they have a black head and white legs. The hornless head with its slightly outward-arched brow is hairy up behind the ears, only then the quaint, long, white wool begins.

Domestic Use

The frugal and resilient Rhön Sheep is very well adapted to the rough mountain climate and is especially suited for feeding on moist, sparse meadows. The hard claws do not infect easily, e.g. with foot rot. Today the sheep are used for area preservation. The ewes are registered for breeding when they are 12

to 18 months old, lambing percentage is 160 percent. The meat is very tasty indeed and is remindful of game.

Wool and Felting Characteristics

The yield of ewes is 3–4 kg wool, of rams 5–6 kg. The fineness is at 32–37 μ . The wool has a homogenous fiber structure and even stack length. It has beautiful curls and compared to other kinds of wool it is quite voluminous.

Felting Tests

As usual, 3 g of wool each and 10 g wool were laid out on a 20 cm x 20 cm surface and moistened with soapy water.

☞ It becomes immediately evident that the wool resists moisture. Despite the soap used the water seems to drip off the wool.

☞ Felting as usual is rather unsuccessful. Even when treated intensely, the wool does not really felt together. It does shrink to a small extent, yet this is more like knotting and falling apart combined. No real felt can be made, what the picking test shows: The wool can be pulled apart without any problems and does not show any damage. The edges, however, connect a bit more strongly.

☞ Felt tests of other fleeces showed better results. I assume that the wool felts well or badly according to each flock's or animal's characteristics. But it can be said that the Rhön Sheep wool does not give itself to felting tightly, it always remains soft.

The Grey Rhön Sheep

The Grey Rhön Sheep is a targeted three-race cross-breeding of Coburger Fox, Coarse-Haired Pommerschen Land Sheep and Rhön Sheep that happened ten to fifteen generations ago. The aim was an economic, unassuming country sheep with textile-fit grey wool. The cross-breed is not included in the breeding book, and it is disputable whether it is a genetically fixed race. The body is similar to that of the Rhön Sheep, and the head is also grey. The legs, however, show a greater color diversity. Unfortunately I have no more information concerning this cross-breed, I have to limit myself to judge its wool.

Wool and Felting Characteristics

At first glance the wool is similar to that of the Rhön Sheep with its even staple length and fine crinkling. Looking closer, you see single fine kemp hair. They are black while the wool hair in the fleece I examined are of an even grey. The color

range of the Grey Rhön Sheep is from brown over silver grey to almost black.

☞ Also here 3 g and 6 g were laid out on a 20 cm x 20 surface and treated according to the above.

☞ Already in the moistening process the wool is a lot more co-operative. The fibers become wet and lay themselves flat onto the working pad. The subsequent treatment shows the desired success. The wool does need some time before felting starts, but the result is a beautiful, smooth felt. Yet it remains somewhat loose and doesn't turn into a firmly closed fabric. The surface is lively, with loops and waves that can be easily seen in part.

Conclusion

In my opinion, the wool of the Grey Rhön Sheep can be more readily compared with that of the Coarse-Haired Pommern Country Sheep. Haptically it is very agreeable and the coloring is vivid. The felting characteristics seem to be too changeable, so I do not wish to give a conclusive final judgment. The wool I worked with showed good felting characteristics, albeit to achieve these you need time, but the end result is a beautiful piece of felt.

MARGIT RÖHM

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Courses and Culture: Felt Tours to Hungary

In one of my workshops in the Pacific Northwest, one of my students told me that she'd love to learn more about felting, but she'd also love to travel around in my wonderful home country. She recommended that I organized a Felt Tour to Hungary. Although I have everything to do this job – I am a felt artist and instructor and am a native to the country that bears that weird language – it didn't come easy for me to imagine myself in the «tourist industry». Back then I was full of negative stereotypes of group travels, as I am a person who prefers to discover on my own. But several of the students in the class joined her in assuring that they would love to take such a trip with me.

☞ So next time I visited my parents, I started the planning of the first Felt Tour.

I decided to arrange a variety of 1- and 2-day classes of very different felting techniques with some innovative artists (such a difficult job, we have too many great felt artists to choose from!). The instructors - Mihály Vetró, Judit Pócs, Gabriella Kovács, Márta Csille - lived in different cities, that's how the idea came to visit them in their hometowns. This way we could also get a little insight into their lives and visit their studios if possible. So, I decided to hire a private minibus and balance the intense days of the workshops with some travelling and sightseeing in the country. On the first day of the tour we met up in the capital of Budapest, and we became «nomads» for 12 days.

☞ The East Hungary itinerary became so successful that I had to add a South and a West Hungary itinerary to the palette with more instructors introducing more classes. Now I lead 2 tours every year, one in April, and one in September. During these past years it became my mission to show places that you can't find in guide books, to choose traditional Hungarian dishes to taste, to visit craft and antique markets, to offer a private trunk-show, to experience some of the thermal baths, and to give an overview of Hungarian culture and history while having the felt and fiber focus as the main theme.

☞ When I started planning the first trip, I couldn't imagine how rewarding it would be in many ways: The tours brought international recognition to the Hungarian felt community, as we were featured in 3 issues of the Felt Matters. I feel privileged to be able to connect like-minded people from all over the world. So far, we have had participants from the USA, Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, France and even from Israel. I love seeing friendships growing out of these tours. As people take various tours in various years, we grow into a global community of felters with shared experiences. The biggest compliment for me is that I have very many returning participants.

☞ Unfortunately, we had to cancel the tours this year, but, anticipating better days, registration for the 2021 tours is open.

FLÓRA CARLILE-KOVÁCS
www.felttours.com

Embroidered Felt Carpets from Kashmir

On a trip through Northern India Mari Nagy und István Vidák got to know the local sheep breeds and traditional felting techniques.

In Srinagar, Kashmir's capital, we visited the Sri Pratap Museum and got to know the museum expert Mustaq Ahmed Begh. He was in the process of writing a book about the history of Kashmir and mentioned local felt products. »Maybe 200 years ago, there lived a merchant. He left Kabul in Afghanistan on horseback. From here he brought some of the typical textiles. His horse had a beautifully embroidered saddle blanket made of felt. This awakened the interest of the native people. So this mastery reached the mountains.«

∞ Our interest was kindled just as much and so we set out to learn more of Kashmir's felting tradition.

Sheep with a Perfect Hairdo

While ambling about town we found an animal market. The sheep looked as if they had just stepped out of the hairdresser's salon. In spring, the herdsman collect and mark their animals and bring them up to the higher mountain ranges. The marking is often made with Henna powder that colors their pelt orange. Sometimes they are shorn in a special way, for example the lower leg, the tail and sometimes an area of the head or back remains unshorn.

∞ The shepherds liked to show off their well-groomed sheep and willingly gave us a lot of information concerning Kashmiri sheep breeds. The shape of the horns is similar to that of the Heidschnucke. An eyecatcher is the long tail of the ram, his hair is of medium- coarse quality.

∞ Sheep with finer wool are called »Russian«. It is a Merino race whose pelt is rougher than that of their European counterparts. Sheep whose heads are black or brown are called »Rajasthan sheep«. Their bodies are small and the wool yield is less. Apart from those, the »Guja breed« is known everywhere.

∞ Shearing is twice a year, in the middle of March and the beginning of September. The fall shearing yields a better felting quality, as the shepherds told us. During a walk through the old part of town we saw many workshops. The most colorful were those that dyed the yarns.

A Visit in the Felters' Quarter

In the felting quarters we met Mohamed Rafik Bat and his endearing family. Their workshop is a room 3,5 x 4,5 meters with many windows. When we got there, the bulrush mat was already laid out on the floor. In the olden times the master weighed the wool with a simple scale, resembling that of a pharmacist. Bat distributed 4.5 kilos of wool on a surface of 170 x 220 cm. The fluffy wool was 30 cm high. He is familiar with the required carding tools, but he has not used them for 15 years. There is a carding workshop in the neighbouring village.

∞ Our master spread the machine-carded wool out with a wooden fork and a thin stick. Then he tore small flakes from the fluffy wool with the stick in his left

hand and directed them towards the mat. He first rolled the material in a mat, later with his lower arms without a mat. Towards the end of the fulling process he rubbed the surface with a piece of soap and continued to roll the working piece with his arms. The end product in natural color was 5 to 6 cm thick. Then he rinsed the felt and hung it up to dry.

Tambour Embroidery with a Hook

Afterwards the felt is decorated with embroideries. Therefore the »Ari« is needed, a special hook with a grip. We looked for a blacksmith where we could watch it being made, and we managed to buy some.

∞ For many weeks on end, the relatives – men and women alike work on the pre-sketched pattern on the naturally colored felt. The front side shows tambour stitches, a kind of chain stitch, on the back a simple wool thread runs. When we stopped at a carpet dealer on the street, we noticed that the Muslim carpets had a different color scheme and always showed floral motifs.

∞ The names of the motifs were recorded in Erfane Ali Porri's textile shop. 32 of the most used are introduced here, e.g. tulips, birds, sun flowers and leaves.

∞ Carpets made for the Hindi inhabitants often show animal motifs. Our initial impression was correct indeed, for the Muslim clientele, the carpets have different colors and the floral motives exclude all others. But not only in Kashmir these artfully felted and embroidered carpets are much sought after: They are also delivered to other regions in India or to other countries.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

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