

filzfun – The English Supplement

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Dear Readers,

Feltmaking connects, also metaphorically speaking. Quite often, long friendships ensue between felters that first meet at seminars, exhibits or felting trips. One fine example are the seven Oberrot felting school graduates from 2017. They had the idea to create collectively, to overcome considerable distances. Like when felted objects taking round trips to be further enhanced by each addressee. The piece is only finished when all seven have worked on it. The results of this wandering ritual are unique „Vessels of Friendship“ (Pages 8/9). Also the „40 Ways in Felt“ by the „Fit in Felt“ graduate class of 2022 made for a highly individual final show (Pages 10-14). Yet, felting not only connects, it can also take a stand. With her embroidery project Guldusi, Pascale Goldenberg draws attention to the dire situation for women in Afghanistan. In the show „Faces to Faces“, the felt artist Sandra Struck-Germann and others felted portraits of the Afghan embroiderers, showing the faces of the

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.

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suppressed women who live in great danger, for us to become better aware.

We portray the Cyprus-bound artist Natalya Brashovetska, originally from the Ukraine. She does volunteer work for refugees from her home country. Her new collection „Victory&Victory“, where she combines different materials and techniques, is dedicated to the brave Ukrainian women (Page 26ff). In a short basic instruction she explains how metallic fibers make for fine highlights in felts. Also the artist Ilona Riehle, who specializes in 3-D objects would like to nudge you with her detailed tutorial to make your own ambitious 3-D honeycomb vase.

Meet another wealth of inspirational material in our portrait of Elvira Altdorf who reports on reverse clothing, upcycling projects and powerfelting workshops. Last but not least we are glad to present a third tutorial for an atmospheric, lovely hand lantern for the Advent and Christmas season. We wish you success and don't forget to mail us a photo of your chosen finished piece. All the best and stay safe and sound into the New Year!

Best regards

Your filzfun team

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The Patchwork Quilts Move On

After its start in Heidelberg the 8th European Quilt-Triennial stops in Switzerland. At the Textile Museum St. Gallen fifty textile and quilt art objects from fifteen nations are on display until April 10th 2023. An international jury selected from 150 transmittals. The exhibit shows the enormous range of contemporary quilting art. Next to politically motivated objects, e.g. about the situation of Afghan women, many artists dedicate themselves to the wake of the pandemic. Other art works dealt with color, form and material in different aesthetic approaches.
textilmuseum.ch/quilt-826th

Felt Encounter in Duisburg

The next felting encounter takes place at the Youth Hostel at the Landschaftspark Duisburg from Februar 23rd to 26th 2023. The motto »Stahl – Rost – Steampunk (Steel – Rust – Steampunk« should coax feltmakers out of their comfort zone and lead them to other material worlds. To make even more exchange possible the Filz Netzwerk offers an interesting pre-course program from February 20th to 23rd 2023. Anemie Koenen brings the fascination of colors closer, Birgit Samson introduces rust coloring on paper, fabrics and felt. Birgit Deutschmann dedicates herself to corsages, girdles and hip drapings. Please find all pertaining information regarding both encounter and pre-course program on the Filz-Netzwerk's website. Application deadline is Dec. 31st 2022.
filznetzwerk.de

Literature and Nature

The textile art exhibit »Blüten-Lese (Blossom Anthology)« shows blanket-size objects made by many different artists in the convent Irsee. The idea is to wrap yourself in such a blanket when you read. Nature and literature merge here. At the occasion of a jubilee celebration there are

also many works by the Munich textile artist Dörte Bach on show. For 30 years she has been teaching at the Schwabenakademie in the Irsee convent. »Blütenlese« is open until January 29th 2023. On the last day a finissage starts at 11 o'clock with an auction for a good cause.
kloster-irsee.de

Meeting Point for Creative

In Dortmund the »Creativea« will be held from March 15th to 19th 2023. Europe's biggest fair for creative people offers all kinds of materials, tools, implements and every accessory required to work. The many-faceted range covers the whole creative trade, from handicraft, artisanry, design, painting and drawing and also felting, spinning, weaving and quilting, wood and metal works, silk and glass painting and jewelry-making. The public is invited to many workshops.
messe-creativa.de

Textile Art in Dormagen

Three artists, Pascale Goldenberg, Gabi Mett and Judith Mundwiler, well-known under the name T.O.P. (Textile Open Project) have a new show called »T.O.P. Connection« which lasts from February 8th to April 23rd 2023. The artists deal with the lifework of Helmut Hahn whose extensive objects are highlights of the Kreismuseum Zon collection in Dormagen. Helmut Hahn has been a juror for the Quilt Art Biennial and Triennial for years and he is famous for his large-size wall hangings. The T.O.P. members studied his work intensely and found common ground and contrasting issues in what they created themselves or made exclusively for this event.
kreismuseumzons.de

The Textile Red Thread

In the exhibit »RotRotRot (RedRedRed)« the use of threads, papers and fabric is the common denominator in the objects of Nike Finger-Hamborg. In the paintings of the artist from Osnabrück the color

red is omnipresent – from a light orange red to dark Bordeaux. The abstract color landscapes keep you enthralled. For the unusual combination of painting and textile objects Nike Finger-Hamborg often reverts to already used material, which is then dyed, woven into, crocheted in or embroidered on – ready for a new life!
tuchmachermuseum.de

The Creative Seven

In the Filzwelt Soltau »Gefäße der Freundschaft (Vessels of Friendship)« are on show. Seven women, all textile enthusiasts, have called this unusual event into life with their travelling objects

Under the title »Gefäße der Freundschaft« more than 40 intriguing, often richly embroidered felted bowls and baskets are presented in the Soltau Filzwelt. Many of those items wandered through seven pairs of hands while they were made; the expression of a very special friendship. The paths of seven creative and skilled women crossed in Oberrot (see photo on the right). In 2017 they graduated from the three-year advanced training »Fit in Filz (Fit in Felt)«. As a farewell token each had felted and embroidered a small turtle.

A Ritual Develops

To tighten the bond further the seven continued to meet each year. The idea was to be collectively creative. Each felted a bracelet – and mailed it to another member of the group. »It was such a joy everytime we kept receiving the parcels. Each bracelet has its own history, and each one was continually enhanced by good feelings, bold ideas and the daintiest embroidery stitches«, explains Christiane Claren. In the beginning, some had no embroidering skills to speak of.
☞ In the course of other projects, this changed: embroidered pencil-cases, book covers and then vessels and containers joined the merry-go-round. »Now not only colorful threads hold us together, but the projects we keep distributing and further embroidering are the »salt« of our group«, the seven say. Then they had the idea to show a part of those treasured objects publicly – and what name could be more appropriate than »Vessels of Friendship«?

Changing Order

During an interview with the seven ladies it became clear that the relative openness of the first step is attractive yet holds a certain responsibility. Also the finishing is not always easy. There is a change in order involved who gets the next ›installment‹, a lot is drawn. But within a year all seven artists must have been addressed: When they meet again, the finished piece is celebrated, each seeing it for the first time with all the other contributions – the steps in between are kept a strict secret. This makes for a very emotional moment.

Exceptional Exhibits

All agree: Each collaborative project strengthened the group further – »as fibers once they felt«. Some have contributed various containers in addition to the items they worked on together. The variety of show pieces is astounding. Ornaments, symbols, signs and sometimes words decorate the vessels – inside and outside, above and below.
∞ The show was accompanied by a combined felting and embroidering workshop conducted by the seven hosts. The participants clearly enjoyed being taught in such an individual, intensely caring way.

ANTJE ERNST

PAGES 10-14

40 Ways in Felt

The show in Oberrot crowned the felt advanced training »Fit in Felt« 2022. Over a period of two to three years the participants met at the felting school to discover new ways and methods. A participant reports on the beautiful weeks of creating and the individual paths taken.

Even the introduction at the first course day was exciting: Places, characters, ideas and knowledge from all over Europe met in Oberrot. The various reasons stated to take up the training were impressive. Some were almost beginners, like me, but also professionals took part who had been felting for years. The aims of our training were just as diverse and sometimes subject to change altogether in the course of the lectures.

Life-Enhancing Time

Obviously, this colorful composition of people and interests was a lucky streak. We got closer and we shared our knowledge and our experiences with the craft. Thanks to the new media we were able to profit from this flocking wisdom also in our free time; we would motivate us regarding our home assignments and talk about all kinds of things. Our felt group chat was partially buzzing, then again mysteriously silent. Even now we use online facilities to seek advice from each other.

Idyll

The trip to Oberrot can be made either by car or by rail. There, in the middle of nowhere, lies Felting Town. That is the nickname of this idyll in the middle of the Neuhausen village near Oberrot. The two-storey building is generously and practically equipped and can be used also in the evenings after the courses are finished. At lunch break we used to buy things at the store restaurant nearby – a veritable feltmaker's paradise. Such quantities of fine wool is addictive!

Comfy Get-Together

In the first week we all worked until late in the evening to finish all tasks and assignments. We lapped up what there was new to learn. But we never ran short of homey moments of getting acquainted and being together with a drop of wine or a cup of tea. As of the second week – in total there were six one-week course elements – we felt already homeward bound. We looked greatly forward to meet again, and to work together, to shoot the breeze and to enjoy.

Individual Felted Objects

So the presentation of the single assignments were always met with suspense. As varied as the group were the results. We had a lot of freedom, given the openness of the tasks, to put to use what we had learned and to implement it. All assignments came out with a deeply personal touch. And with each of those we got closer to our final projects under no pressure, almost without being aware of it.

Six Course Weeks

The different teaching blocks were separated into various themes or mottos. The week was usually taught by two instructors, which made for a lot of information to be gained. We could always ask questions and got valuable answers and methods to solve a problem.

In the first week, we immersed ourselves with Heidi Greb and Beate Bossert in the raw wool world, natural colors and transparent surfaces. The second week stood under the sign of colors. We dyed in pots and in microwave ovens. Gabriele Breuer introduced us to the realm of colors and how they seep into the wool. Beatrice Schaf Giesser taught us to play with them. First you watch, then you mix colors yourself with Neocolor until you finally get the desired hue by further carding, laying out the wool and felting.

From Vest to Hanging Dress

In the third week, Ursula Eichenberger shared her millinery skills. During the second half, Beate Bossert and Minka De Weerd taught us various decoration and tassel techniques. The fourth week hosted Kerstin Scherr with her theme: »Clothing for every woman«. The big tables were copiously used for making vests or hanging dresses, the laying-out of the wool always being on the delicate side. In the fifth week we were assisted by Claudia Cappiello and Beate Bossert with ideas for interior decoration in a wide sense.

∞ The sixth week was dedicated to working on your own for the final assignment– under the watchful eyes of Lyda Rump and Kerstin Scherr. One could contact them at any time, they were always approachable to hoist up motivation, to convey techniques, to recommend the right direction or to encourage their students to go through with their projects.

Final Exhibit

In preparation for the final exhibit we worked a lot at home. It was only at the exhibit that we realized how much each had learned in the training program and how well we had used it in our own projects. Mine was called »Festive Gear for Humans and Animals«, a dress and jewelry for a cow. The school's graduation party highlighted the event. To see all projects so favorably presented, eating, dancing and talking together – we had a great time in Felting Town. The Fritz family, above all Sonja, really succeeded in rendering a unique felting idyll, brimming over with life and knowledge.

From a Galapagos Iguana to Garden Scissors

A total of 40 participants of the advanced »Fit in Felt« training presented their final pieces at the graduation show in the summer. From garments, shoes,

felted paintings, interior decorations, accessories and art work to tools and locomotion devices – everything was there, and then some! The last item mentioned was a yurt made by Svetlana Kamps. »Always forward and further, though in a circle between life and death. All that you can find in the felted yurt«, one graduate student describes her final project in the catalogue. Judith Dössegger calls her objects »From the World of Bees«. The apiarist had felted honeycombs. Christina Gehrig had a closer look at the »Building Principles of Life«, which resulted in a three-dimensional, hanging felt object.

Barefoot at the Beach

Renate Gerlach-Haber preferred a less theoretical approach. She loves nature and working in her garden: »Flowers are often felted, but never gardening tools. So I had the idea to felt a wheelbarrow, shovel, rake and watering can.« Veronika Moosburger presented »Mein Weg in Filz (My Felting Path)« – different pairs of shoes that will accompany her step for step, keeping the memory of the wonderful time in Oberrot fresh. ♡ Petra Tauschel is underway at the seashore. »Barfuß am Ufer (Barefoot at the shore)«. She depicted the colorful variety of pebbles, »the moving sea, the reflections of the sun on water and clouds«. Also on Elisabeth Kaldorf's »Sonnenuntergang im Watt (Sunset at the Tidlands)« you can see the »converging of sea and sky«.

Animal Visitors and Far-Eastern Flair

Angela Teuchert felted a life-like Galapagos Land Iguana. She found it especially intriguing how several felt techniques at a time could be implemented in a single project. In Ingrid Modlmayr's »Filz-Urwald (Felt Jungle)« even more animals were peeping out. In the memory of a trip to India Brigitta Auer felted a »jacket with a Far-Eastern flair.« Claudia Unger's »Naturmoden (Natural Fashion)«, on the other hand, consist of a series of garments open for combination in different natural hues. It gets cuddly in the »cozy corner« made by Christina Mussbacher. This homey effect is achieved by a lamp, a blanket and a rocking chair, the back of which was decorated with a felted rhomb pattern.

REGULA LEUTERT AND VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGE 15

Dancing Colors

*In her felted series »Woolscapes«
Flóra Carlile-Kovács plays with light
reflexes on water*

In Flóra-Carlile-Kovács's opinion »handmade felt is underestimated and underrepresented in the art world«. In her felted series titled »Woolscapes«, exhibited in the Jansen Art Center in Lynden WA (USA), the Hungarian-born artist shows once more how well she succeeds »to break the boundary between craft and fine art«. For ten years, she has been living in the Pacific Northwest, surrounded by the salt water of the Puget Sound and fresh water of many lakes. In »Woolscapes«, her latest series, she has tried to capture the effects of light reflections on water. »In my earlier works I started using small pieces of hand-dyed silk fabrics as my »paintbrush«. Small silk »petals« of colorful silks piled up on my table and were merged with wool to provide an optical color blending for the viewer and to create an impressionist look«, says the 46-year old artist.

♡ Then she wanted to add a little extra dimension to these wall hangings, and to enhance the contrast between the felted and unfelted silk surfaces. »I started adding small pleats to the silk that reminds me of the texture when the breeze creates ruffles on the water«, she describes the various working steps. The result is a series of felted paintings that render different color- and light reflections on water in a highly atmospheric way.

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 16-17

Felted Sculptures

*Leipzig artists presented a fusion
of their objects in a joint exhibition*

Mona Ragy Enayat, a beacon of Leipzig artistic and cultural life and the textile artist Yvonne Zoberbier, also from Leipzig, showed their joint exhibit »Verschmelzung (Mergence)« in the rooms of the Leipzig Trade School in the summer.

Contrast and Replenishment

Mona and Yvonne first met a year ago. Next to a growing friendship they discovered, above all, the inspiring forces of their different artistic approach. Yvonne was much taken by the powerful colors and expression of Mona's paintings, Mona loved the filigree and delicateness of Yvonne's felted sculptures. These contrasting art forms, yet with a certain similarity in subject matter, were inspiring for both. The two had the idea to turn a single show by Mona that was already in full plan into a joint venture. ♡ What can be safely said about the uniqueness of this show: For the first time, the material felt, too often associated only with the applied arts, has found its way into the free fine arts. ♡ The »Mergence« here is more than anything a fusion of themes in the sense of an inspiration living from contrast and replenishment. While Mona's paintings, showing the colorful, proud powers of being a woman, also leave room for mankind as a whole in terms of encouragement and joy, Yvonne's sculptures convey a different message. Her sculptures, due to their retraction and their »lost-in-themselves« bearing – marked by the mostly closed eyes – demand a moment of keeping still.

Harmonious Beauty

Especially with the head sculptures Yvonne's felting mastery becomes obvious. Each facial expression, every wrinkle has been wrought out of the material with difficulty, from a distance they look like marble busts. And they leave the viewer with a mixed feeling of admiration and dismay. They look like they were asleep or resting and bring to mind the link between life and death, of becoming and fading. They show the eternal human issues, like youth and old age, in one single face.

♡ The torsi clearly relate to antiquity – »noble simplicity and silent greatness«, as Johann Joachim Winkelmann described the essence of art in the 18th century. In their well-proportioned beauty, their delicateness and vulnerability they stand entirely for themselves, sometimes hidden in cocoon-like drapings. Swaying from the ceiling, whether adorning walls or wood, they embody an elf-like lightness which reaches out to us tenderly, bestowing pride and power on us.

The Suspense of Contrast

Mona belongs to the Egyptian culture group, she was born in Kairo. Yvonne's

sculptures are indebted to antiquity and European cultural traditions. We're on tenterhooks what other inspiring objects will come from these two artists. At any rate, the fine arts have gained a new genre, felted sculptures.

DR. KATRIN THEILE

PAGES 18-19

Living Eyes

For the »Faces to Faces« exhibit artists have turned portraits of Afghan embroiderers into different art objects. Sandra Struck-Germann felted four portraits.

From former contributions, the filzfun readers are already familiar with the Guldusi Embroidery Program, a joint German-Afghan project. At the show »Faces to Faces« (within the scope of the European Patchwork Congregation) ten artists presented textile works on the basis of photo portraits of Afghan embroiderers. One such artist is Sandra Struck-Germann. In an interview she describes how her felt portraits were made.

How were you inspired by these portraits and which facial features are of special importance to you?

Sandra Struck-Germann: I browsed through the picture gallery and shortlisted some faces, solely led by intuition. The expression of the eyes is crucial, I think. I made my first choice early on, but the images were only felted two years later. In the meantime, a lot of things happened in the world (the pandemic) and in Afghanistan the Taliban seized power again.

☞ I was very disturbed to learn that one of these ladies was fatally shot. This sadness made me change my initial plan to felt the portraits as colorful images of the soul. It just didn't feel right after a tragedy like that to felt Oleajan's face in bright colors. Though I have never met her in person, I grieved, and to convey that I chose brownish colors to depict her face in a big felted portrait.

How do you proceed when you felt a portrait?

Sandra Struck-Germann: Once I have decided which photo to work with I search for a fitting cutout. For »Faces

to Faces«, however, I wanted to show the entire faces. I lay out the back with pre-felted mostly and have my wool handy, preferably fine Merino. For the three colored images I used the same color palette. I »paint« the pictures with wool, i.e. I put many sheer layers of wool on top of each other.

I know the embroiderers well and immediately recognized them in your portraits. Are you satisfied with your work?

Sandra Struck-Germann: Of course I always keep finding areas that could be worked over, but at a certain point I put my foot down: No, everything remains in place from now on. This is exactly the part I like so much in feltmaking: there is only limited control of the outcome. I have to stop working on the image eventually. Then I start felting and later fulling. And when all soap suds are rinsed out it shows whether my preparatory work has been sufficient.

☞ There are different criteria regarding good quality. When these are fulfilled I am more or less satisfied. Harmonious proportions are important. Are mouth and nose placed at the proper place, is the play of light and shadow convincing? The decisive question: Do the eyes come across lively?

☞ When the »Faces to Faces« show was planned nobody had an inkling what tragic changes were in store for Afghanistan. The women become invisible under the Taliban. When they try to act more independently they risk being accused as rebels. With this exhibit we show the world that we fight the ideology to ban women from the public sphere with creative means.

PASCALE GOLDENBERG

PAGES 20-21

Fireworks of Creative Ideas

A wide range of courses was on offer during the Filzkolleg in Soltau

Summertime is Lecture time – under this motto we first presented a new, additional feltmakers' get-together in 2016. For seven years now, with hardly an interruption, we have been hosting a

summer week of high-level felting in the course of the Lectures.

Theory and Practise

In 2022 we decided not only to give the craft a lot of room in the Lectures and to teach the different techniques of graded difficulty in expert courses by Barbara Eichhorn, Helga Steegborn, Irina Kalaschnikow, Tanja Kahl and Meike Raßbach, but to focus more on the theoretical challenges that each feltmaker experiences with matching offers. As of this year, you can train as a course instructor at the Filz-Netzwerk e.V. A part of the training takes place during the Lecture Course on three days where your presence is required. From now on, Susanne Schächter-Heil's trusted concept »Taking Course« will be on schedule on a regular basis.

In Great Demand

Moreover, a photo workshop with Doris Niestroj was fully booked in a flash and also a two-day course with Doreen Lüpfer called »Therapeutisches Filzen mit Kindern und Senioren (Therapeutical Felting for Kids and the Elderly)« was enthusiastically received.

☞ It is ever so alluring how doing things on a collective basis serves as a bond between people. In this sense we will continue to do our best so we all can felt, think and learn together.

Voices of Experience

»I took part in a course by Irina Kalaschnikow where we made elegant hats and caps. It wasn't my first hat course, but the methods taught there were special, above all with regard to laying out the fine wool of only 70 g in a 45° angle. The resulting felt was so elastic that several hat models could be made from the same basic form. This really bowled me over and made the decision what kind of hat to make really difficult.«

Viola Burdack

Time Flies When You're Having (Informative) Fun

»At the moment I take the instructor's course with Susanne. I am totally happy. She is a true expert and a very nice person. The three days in Soltau were full of information, interesting and a lot of fun.«
Ute Rütten

Fireworks of Creative Ideas

»Irina Kalaschnikow's stole course proved stalwart indeed. We all worked intensely,

which was called for, to implement all these new techniques and suggestions. Irina left us with a display of fireworks regarding creative ideas and tricks, many of which were news to even experienced feltmakers. Rarely ever have I learned as much in a workshop.«

Gabriele Böllinghaus

Felting Lectures – Passing on Knowledge

The great thing about the Filz-Netzwerk e.V. is the unique combination of tradition and a new dawn, courage and the will to change, experimental fun, creativity and stamina that show in both the members and the people in charge. The Felting Lectures were born of the idea to learn from each other and to make our members' expertise public. The Netzwerk's instructors and members pass on their great skills, various techniques and deep knowledge about feltmaking to the participants.

☞ For some years the Lectures have been held in co-operation with the »Felto« Filzwelt in Soltau, which valorized both course time and free time a lot. The Lectures have turned into a felting experience that feels great all over.

2023 Felting Lectures

For 2023, the date for the next Lecture Course is already set: June 26th to July 1st 2023. We look forward to all who want to take part!

filznetzwerk.de

SUSANNE SCHÄCHTER-HEIL

PAGES 22-23

Shimmering Insects

Feltmaking, dyeing, printing and embroidering were scheduled at the sixth international advanced felt training in Lower Austria

Their love for the unique material wool and the joy to make something with your own hands forms the bond between the artists of the Wollmodus association. In their seminars, courses and different projects they pass on the felting handicraft on a high quality level. Also national and international networking of craftspeople, artists and producers is a central issue.

Network in the Viennese Forest

The sixth international advanced felting course organized by Barbara Martin and Sawatou Mouratidou took place under the motto »Wollraum (Woolspace)« in the summer of 2022. These two Wollmodus members have invited high-class international and Austrian instructors to the idyllic Laab im Walde. Amidst the beautiful nature of the famous Viennese Forest a varied course program was taught, apart from feltmaking, dyeing and printing also diverse embroidery techniques.

Creative from Wool to Willow

During the course »Three in One« by Nina Demidova the participants learned design a piece of clothing of their choice using a total of three techniques. Felting, eco- and medium print were a demanding trinity. At first, patterns and resists for a seamless piece of clothing were made. This was felted afterwards from white Merino and silk. At last the workpiece was printed in colors with blossoms and leaves – you cannot get more individual than that.

☞ 3-D embroidery was the subject of Betti Paw's (also known as Bettina Kammerer) workshop. The students formed a three-dimensional insect with needle, thread and a lot of skill. They learned basic Stumpwork techniques, of gold- and bead embroidery as well as painting on silk. The combination of beads, sequins, wire, organdy, tulle, felt, silk and metal threads mirrored the detailed beauty of real insects surprisingly well. After four days, for glimmering fantasy insects were ready to fly.

☞ Anja Lampert showed her group simple and more intricate basic stitches in her workshop »Abstract Embroidery«. On focus were experiments with various materials, yarns and fabrics and experiencing how materials, various stitches and patterns can be combined to surprising results. Inspirations for their abstract images the participants found in nature.

☞ Unfortunately, the course for basket-making by Kim Bons didn't take place.

Commitment and Luck

Next to the joy that lies in any creative action we tried to convey a deliberate, economical and considerate use of resources and the environment. Fitting here was the almost extinct craft of another instructor, Michael Rothwangl, who gives a long life to precious ancient tools.

The artistic results of all courses were a sight to see and made the devoted participants really happy. The food was great, the surrounding meadows and forest as well – what a wonderful opportunity to learn new techniques and to experiment with different materials, to talk shop and have a lot of fun with like-minded people.

SAWATOU MOURATIDOU AND
BETTINA KAMMERER

PAGES 26-31

Dedicated to the Strong Ukrainian Women

For the first time, the well-known felt artist Natalya Brashovetska presents her new fashion line merging various techniques and materials in the filzfun

»Strong, brave and beautiful« – the new fashion line by Natalya Brashovetska is dedicated to the women of Ukraine, emphasizing the strength and beauty of the latter. »With the V & V line I want to draw attention to the art of feltmaking with different techniques and material combinations«, says the native Ukrainian who has recently earned a second higher degree as a fashion designer. In order to absorb as much new information as possible she had banned herself from using the familiar material felt for the duration of her university projects. »My main efforts were directed to studying the creation of a costume, to work on creating collections and to independently complete all the stages from the first sketch to the last button sewn on«, explains Natalya Brashovetska.

☞ The new collection proves her mastery. Next to felt, she uses a variety of artificial and natural materials: amongst them metal, knitwear and leather. Mixing traditional felting techniques with modern expertise is a trademark of Brashovetska's art, which is mirrored in her latest collection as well by the usage of felt in tailoring. »Felt can take its place in the world of high fashion«, she is convinced, naming as an example the successful collaboration between Claudy Yongstra, the outstanding Dutch felt and textile designer and the Dutch designer duo Victor and Ralph for the Fall 2019 Couture Collection.

Discover the World

»I am willing to share my feltmaking knowledge with regard to tailored products«, says the artist who conducts international workshops, e.g. in the Fiberfusing Studio in The Netherlands. Ten years ago she took a course with Dorie van Dijk, her »godmother in the felting world«. Felting turned her life upside down. Soon, the trained operating-room nurse started a full-fledged career as a felt designer and trainer. »Feltmaking is both a job and a passion for me«, we learn. »After a long trip to the US and Canada with master classes, I spend the majority of my time in my studio improving and exploring felting potential, along with opportunities to merge techniques.« Through her decision to pursue felt design she not only found a new profession, but also her »peace of mind«, as she says in retrospect. »Moreover, felting gave me the opportunity to travel and explore the world, but also to find new friends and meet amazing people.«

» For 20 years Cyprus has been the designer's second home. Her studio is in her late father-in-law's house, with a charming view of the village church, a monastery and the surrounding woods. »After he passed away we turned the premises into a studio. So the memory of my teacher is lingering on«, Natalya Brashovetska fondly remembers. He had been a shoemaker all his life and taught his daughter-in-law many of his skills. »I continue to make shoes here. It still smells of leather, shoe glue and the sound of the shoe-hammer is heard«, she describes the atmosphere. »Although I have an extensive understanding of the shoe production and like designing new styles, my earliest conscious projects were and continue to be clothing«, the 49-year old artist reveals.

Up to 100 Sketches

Natalya Brashovetska draws her inspirations from everything around her: »An old fence, a door or vintage clothes may catch my eye.« Then she must act immediately to sketch or note her ideas, even during the night. »Each day I go to sleep and wake up with felting ideas«, she smiles. Before a new project is tackled exact planning is called for. »I can draw up to 100 sketches until I get the idea down to the tiniest detail.« Thanks to extensive planning she can anticipate risks during the implementation stage. Spontaneous projects and experimental phases typically take place in between planned ones.

» She works with many different types of wool. »For the production of shoes,

bags and decorative objects I often use Bergschaf wool from Austria.« She enjoys combining this kind with different breeds such as Merino, Corydale, Blueface and others. »Merino with 16 to 19.5 Micron is my preferred choice for more delicate things, like for example clothing«, she continues. Of course she uses a variety of fabrics and fibers in general, depending on the current project. »I also adore artificial fabrics; they look fantastic in felt«, Natalya Brashovetska says enthusiastically, adding: »Regardless of whether the fabrics are natural or artificial, I prefer wetfelting and nuno felting to other methods. These techniques yield the best results.«

» In order to get the right shade of colour she dyes wool, silk or other fibers herself. »I truly enjoy experimenting with colours, blending them to achieve the desired shade«, the artist explains. To this end, she doesn't shy away from using harder tools. For ten years she has been using the rug, a special dirt arrester, as a felting mat. This so-called spaghetti mat has an elastic and durable meshing. »The charm of this tool is that the first felting process is unusually accelerated. Its structured surface and stinginess massage the felt and hasten the shrinking process«, she describes its advantages. Moreover, the mat helps to save water. »It holds several liters that can be released by pressing«.

Both Useful and Beautiful

The native Ukrainian is not only a dedicated artist, but she also volunteers in animal care, since Cyprus faces problems with stray and homeless animals. However, hobbies and work have drifted into the shadows over the spring of 2022. »Currently, I spend a lot of time helping Ukrainian refugees, staying in contact all around the clock. I am engaged in a variety of jobs, including translations, paperwork support and on-the-spot humanitarian assistance«, she tells us. Her closest relative are currently living with her on Cyprus. Initially, she felt powerless, but later she wanted to take action. »I wanted to do something not only useful but beautiful«, Natalya Brashovetska remembers.

» This desire has resulted in the exceptionally lovely fashion line »V+V«. »It is a collection that I present for the first time on the pages of your magazine, dedicated to the brave women of Ukraine«, she says, deeply in thought. Asked about her dreams for the future, Natalya Brashovetska does not have to think twice: »I wish for peace in Ukraine.«

After its victory, she could imagine that more people would attend her workshops and unleash their own creative potential. »I am willing to share my knowledge and create new artistic products and inspiring designs«, the felt artist lets us know, looking forward to exciting projects.

Natalya Brashovetska

Learn more about her present projects, exhibits and workshops on Natalya Brashovetska's website. In April to May 2023 she plans to give new workshops in the United States and Canada. In the fall of the same year workshop will be held in Italy and France.

» Moreover the artist is inviting the Feltmakers who are interested in visiting the beautiful island of Aphrodite, where they can both gain knowledge in felting and visit the historical and beautiful places of the island.

» Natalya Brashovetska also plans online tutoring with different felting courses as of January 23. Interested parties can contact her directly per e-mail. The artist is currently working on practical guide catalogue focused on felting techniques on wool processing technology, amongst others shrinking or layout methods, which will appear in due course.

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VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 32-35

Tutorial: Eye-Catchers

Shiny gold fibers are absolute attention-getters in a felted scarf or a sweater. Natalya Brashovetska shows how to use fabrics with metal fibers as a decorative clothing element in her brief step-by-step instructions for a fabric pattern. She allows for a first glance at her E-book that will come out soon.

Material

- » Two pieces of Margelan silk approx. 43 x 30 cm (Size A3)
- » 5 g Merino roving 18.5 mic
- » Fabric with metal fibers of your choice
- » Felting equipment (scissors, ball sprinkler/sprayer, mesh, soap, thread, sander, skid-proof mat)

- 1 Lay out the silk and cut to sample size.
- 2 Wet the silk and straighten it.
- 3 Lay out the wool in the shape of clouds.
- 4 Wet the wool with the sprinkler and cover it with the piece of mesh, here from a mosquito net.
- 5 Rub the workpiece with soap.
- 6 Remove the mesh cautiously.
- 7 Align the edges of the workpiece.
- 8 Divide the to-be felted piece in equal parts by means of a thick thread.
- 9 Lay out pre-prepared patterns from metallic fabric on wool. Adjust the patterns and smooth them out.
- 10 Remove marking threads. Wet the workpiece with the sprayer.
- 11 Cover the working piece with fine silk.
- 12 Cover it with a piece of mesh and rub it with soap.
- 13 Process it with the sander, stop at each place for 5-10 seconds.
- 14 Remove the mesh.
- 15 Process it with the sander again.
- 16 Cut off the edges of the silk that go beyond the sample.
- 17 Turn the sample over to the other side.
- 18 Process it with the sander again, stop at each place for 5-10 seconds.
- 19 Turn the workpiece around.
- 20 Now felt the pattern in volume and in flat.

- 21 Roll it up from different angles.
- 22 Gather in the folds of the sample's edges.
- 23 Rub each side in a circular motion.
- 24 Fold along the length of the sample in 1/3.
- 25 Ending to fold in three parts.
- 26 Roll the piece in from different sides and fold it again.
- 27 If necessary, repeat the felting steps.
- 28 Stretch the sample edges.
- 29 Measure the sample on the long side.
- 30 Measure the sample on the short side. The finished piece is initially 42 x 29 cm, in the end the measurements should be approx. 24 x 17 cm.
- 31 The finished piece, i.e two final samples.
- 32 The result is a thin, soft, flexible fabric that is easy to drape. Natalya Brashovetska recommends the thus gained fabric samples for scarves or shawls, light sweaters or summer dresses.

NATALYA BRASHOVETSKA

PAGES 36-39

Luminous Dahlia

Ilona Riehle loves felted 3-D art objects with fascinating colors and patterned areas that go well with any interior

Geometrical forms, lucid colors, spectacular 3-D effects – the Dahlia cushions are Ilona Riehle's trademark. »The idea for the cushion had been on my mind for a long time. I deliberated the technique, the size of the individual segments and the color combination«, she tells us. »Because colors are really

important and they decide, after all, whether the pattern will show to advantage.« For her self-invented Dahlia technique Ilona Riehle uses reserve foils which allow for different layers. Felted 3D-art objects are her absolute passion, giving free rein to her imagination. The textile engineer does not only excel professionally as a cut manageress but also in her felt art. In 2014 she discovered felted clothing by the famous Ukrainian felt artist Diana Nagorna on the internet for the first time. »When I saw Diana's marvellous dresses and dreamlike felted surfaces I was done for«, Ilona Riehle recalls. She was adamant to learn feltmaking herself. »But I only dared to do take some wool in hand two years later. With the help of many online courses and videos by renowned felt artists I taught myself feltmaking.«

Harmonious Art Objects for the Living Room

The Latvian artist moved from the Baltic Sea to Germany for love 27 years ago. Today she lives in Aschaffenburg with her husband, surrounded by nature; by the meadows and fields of the Bavarian Lower Main area. »Each time when I see an impressive piece of bark during my walks it makes me think of felting, how I could implement something like this in reserve technique«, she says. For art objects »regardless whether they are interesting wall decorations, vases, bowls or felted cushions always bring harmony to an interior and make for a cozy atmosphere in the Hygge style«, the artist believes. The term Hygge is of Scandinavian providence and stands for a comfy home feeling. When felting art objects, the development of the resist with the pertaining reserve foil is crucial for the outcome. »Everybody knows the usual, flat resists, but you can make resists of many layers. The results are unbelievably interesting objects«, she claims.

3-D Surfaces

For felting her art objects Ilona Riehle prefers sturdy wool fleece of 21 to 27 micron. Since she particularly likes 3-D surfaces she works a lot in block technique. Reserve foils in single parts prevent the different layers of wool to felt together. The result are geometrical, colored and patterned parts, as the Dahlia cushions show. »There is a wealth of colors like with natural Dahlias and it is much fun to try out many color combinations«, the 50-year old Latvian lady gladly holds.

Clothes for Every Season

The most fascinating thing with felting is the possibility to make seamless clothing. »In my profession in the fashion industry this is not possible«, she admits. Depending on which materials and feltmaking techniques are chosen one can make suitable clothing for summer and winter. For summer dresses Ilona Riehle often uses the so-called sandwich technique. »I put a layer of sheer Margelan on the resist. On top of that comes, equally thinly spread, fine Merino wool of 16 to 18 Micron, in cloud shape or crosswise and then I cover it yet again with another layer of Margelan silk«, she explains her technique. The result is an enchantingly light summer felt – thin, malleable and smooth, ideal for cool summer nights. For fall and winter clothing the Latvian lady loves to felt warm sweaters or cardigans. »Wool has such great characteristics – nothing compares to a beautiful felted winter sweater«, she beams and points to the one she's wearing, light blue with felted-in silky velvet. In order to felt this kind she uses Merino of 18 to 19 Micron. The amount of wool required and the laying out of course differ depending on each project. »Due to the varied ways to lay out the wool you can achieve stretch effects, lend more voluminous features to a workpiece and often an impressive, three-dimensional surface goes with it«, she knows.

Passing on Skills and Knowledge

She often meets surprised glances when she wears her felted clothing. »This is part due to people being fascinated from the objects themselves, and partly because they are unfamiliar with the craft«, says the Aschaffenburgian by choice. She wants to popularize feltmaking as an artisan craft, for example on Instagram, where she also passes on certain skills. It is such a joy to browse photos of her intricate garments and ravishing art objects.

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 40-45

Tutorial: Honeycomb Vase

Felted art objects adorn every living room. Ilone Riehle instructs us in step-by-step how a 3-D honeycomb vase is made.

Material

- ☞ Approx. 70 g fleece wool in 21 mic in three colors (also other wool is possible)
- ☞ optional: silk caps or other decorative fibers
- ☞ Felting Equipment: Soap (for instance olive soap), smooth gloves, ball sprinkler, nylon gauze, bubble wrap, towels
- ☞ Resist Accessories: Sound-insulating foil for the resist (laminated pad from the hardware store), some greenhouse foil for release films / reserve foil (hardware store)
- ☞ Ruler, water-proof pencil, scissors
- ☞ Optional: a narrow glass vase (17cmx3cmx3cm)
- ☞ A piece of pipe or a stick

Advice

The shrinking factor of the honeycomb's lower part is at 1,55 and at the neck of the vase 1.4. If you use different wool the shrinking factors may differ.

☞ It is important to felt with smooth gloves, so the soapy hands can glide well over the felt.

☞ My personal advice: I recommend a glass vase as an inlay. These instructions are meant for a pure art object or an actual vase for dried flowers.

Instructions

1 Cut the resist out of the sound insulation foil, measurements see photo.

2 Cut 24 release films out of the greenhouse foil. If such a foil is not at hand you can use punched pockets (office supplies). The release films' measurements see photo 2 a.

3 Take dark-grey fleece and divide the volume in half (always taking into consideration how voluminous the fleece itself is) Lay out the first part of the honeycomb (not yet the neck). Leave 2-3 cm protruding to be folded over the resist.

4 Wet the workpiece with the ball sprinkler filled with soapy water. Cover the wool with nylon gauze and press it down carefully. Additionally, glide over it lightly with a piece of soap. Remove the gauze and turn the resist around.

☞ My tip: This workpiece requires a lot of turning around. I recommend to put the piece in between two bubble wraps with the bubbles facing toward the wool area. So it can be reversed much easier and the laid out wool doesn't get damaged.

5 Fold the sticking-out fibers over closely along the resist's edges.

6 Lay out the fleece on this side, but don't cross the edges as much as was the case in laying out the first side.

7 Wet the workpiece, cover it with gauze, rub soap in and turn it to the other side again. Important: Before the release films are applied please mind the following: Since the wool layer cannot be reached anymore after the release film is put on you have to control whether there is wool enough everywhere and that there are no thinly covered areas. Also check whether the workpiece is well soaped. This step is required at each honeycomb layer that is put onto the films.

8 Put on four films. They should be at least 1 cm apart. The foils to the left and to the right at the horizontal edges have to be put on 0.5 cm away from each other, because the other half comes from the other side (so you achieve the desired distance of 1 cm)

9 Now lay out a second wool layer in white, cover it with gauze, wet it and press it lightly.

10 Turn the felt work piece to the other side and lay out the four other films. (see step 8)

11 Fold the protruding fibers over close to the resist around the edges.

12 Lay out the fleece.

13 Put four release films on this white wool layer in reverse order to those that already lie in the first row. This means: Where in the first row you find a whole film you put on only half a one. Put the film in the middle at the horizontal edges.

- 14** Lay out fleece wool in a middle shade of grey.
- 15** Repeat step 4.
- 16** Repeat step 5.
- 17** Now the fleece is not only layed at the honeycombs but also at the neck of the vase. Wet the workpiece and press the wool down with care.
- 18** Turn the work around and lay out the vase's neck at the other side.
- 19** Now the third row of film is placed in reverse order to the second row, meaning to say these are put on exactly like the foils in the first row.
- 20** Lay out white wool at the honeycomb part and neck. Then repeat step 4.
- 21** Repeat step 5.
- 22** Finish laying out the last side with white fleece, wet and rub it.
- 23** If you feel like decorating the neck do it now, for example with some silk caps or other fibers. This step is entirely optional.
 ~ Important: The laying out of the wool and the decorating are over now. Now it comes to felting it well. Treat the to be felted piece well with hands in smooth gloves, rub and roll it back and forth on a piece of pipe or a round stick. The purpose is to render the felt stable in such a way that the resist can be taken out.
- 24** To remove the resist, take pointed scissors along the round bottom edge with great care and cut through every layer. Then cut all layers open at the round overlap, see photo 24 b.
- 25** Unfold the honeycomb bottom and remove the resist, see 25 b.
- 26** Remove the films.
 ~ My advice: To be on the safe side I recommend to remove all films and to let the work piece dry completely. Then you have the chance to check all honeycombs, whether they have been laid out evenly without holes or too sparse areas. When you find fault you can dry-

felt lightly with wool in the respective color and a felting needle and mend it. When the workpiece is still wet this wouldn't work.

27 After having checked everything and after eventual mendings wet the workpiece again and treat it intensely from both sides with your hands in the smooth gloves. Each honeycomb has to be thoroughly treated.

28 To stabilize the felt further roll the workpiece on a piece of pipe or a stick in each direction. After each cycle unwind the work and check that the honeycombs don't get matted. In yet another cycle roll the feltpiece up itself. Also here check after every time that the honeycombs don't mat.

29 Pull the work piece in shape after each cycle.

30 Each honeycomb must be treated firmly with both hands from each side.

31 Continue felting, kneading, rubbing, throwing the work piece down and pull it in shape again.

32 Now the fulling has reached a stage that the curved parts can be checked. If you see a curve is askew simply cut the honeycomb in shape with the scissors.

33 All honeycomb edges must be sealed by working them with your hands and rubbed against a corrugating surface (e.g. a rubber mat).

34 Pull or cut every honeycomb in shape.

35 Fold the honeycomb parts together and treat them firmly with the rubber mat.

36 When you want to put a glass vase inside you can do that now so that the vase's edge stops shrinking and the felt can assume the contained shape.

37 Continue to felt the honeycomb parts.

38 Now each honeycomb must be treated by hand. Important: All art objects only look good as long as the felt is »standing up«. The honeycombs

must have the firmness to remain standing. When they refuse to do that even after they have been brought into shape the felt is not yet stable enough and the honeycombs must be felted further.

39 Rinse the finished object in clear water, press the water carefully out and bring each single honeycomb into form. The upper honeycomb row must stand at the vase's neck, the lower horizontally at the bottom, the two middle rows are situated proportionally in between. The honeycombs must not collapse but have to remain standing in the position you bring them into. In this state let the vase dry and the felt will keep its shape.

~ Important: When you don't use the glass vase as an inlay the vase's neck must be filled out when drying to get even and beautiful. You can stuff it with protective sheet parts. Just take care that you take material that will glide smoothly into the neck without roughening up the felt.

40 In this state, let the vase dry completely.

ILONA RIEHLE

PAGES 46-49

Inspiration for Humans and the Soul

From raw wool to nuno felt: Elvira Altdorf has been gleaning on all possible facets of felt

Voluptuous curly collars, sophisticated shawls from silk and needle fleece strips, elegant reversible clothing, tailored cardigans and noble footwear for both house and outdoors: In Elvira Altdorf's sun-flooded studio in her lush garden near Aachen truly extravagant garments and accessories are made. She welcomes guests there, but you can also spot the passionate felt artists at art or designer fairs, in galleries or exhibitions in Germany, Belgium, The Netherlands or France.

~ The artist, who was born in Rimburg started her professional career initially as a consumer goods manager, discovered feltmaking for herself about twenty years ago.

Courses Here and Abroad

Everything started with the sheep she kept herself: Elvira Altdorf experimented with the shorn wool of her livestock and made first felting experiences. She fell for the craft once and for all when she saw the delicate felt fashion by Charlotte Buch during a show in the gallery Smend in Cologne. »I have studied with famous felt artists here and abroad to perfect my techniques and to learn as much as possible about felting and dyeing«, she tells us.

☞ But she also immersed herself in the history of the felting craft and in textile art forms of different countries. Together with her husband Heinz she took part in educational trips with the artist and researcher István Vidák to India and Transylvania, to Turkey and Mongolia. She remembers unforgettable encounters and adventures. Shortly before the pandemic broke out she went to New Zealand for an educational journey.

Delicate or Firm

Elvira Altdorf is much taken by the fact that felt can either be delicate or sturdy when she interprets the traditional craft in a modern sense. She loves the magical shrinking in the nuno technique a lot. »The bigger the workpiece on my table, the more I immerse myself in the dainty plucking out of the fine Merino«, she describes. In this method she creates light reversible clothing with two different sides to the fabric; each piece is unique.

☞ But it's not only the delicate fibers that find her interest, she is also a friend of raw wool – often produced by local sheep herders, still smelling of sheep. She puts it to use in cushion furs, carpets and collars that she later dyes herself.

Her Own Studio Since 2004

As a milestone in her new career as a professional feltmaker the 63-year old considers the opening of her own studio on Übach-Palenberg in 2004. It is generously equipped and airy, and there she creates her own felt work and hosts workshops, too – they are all special in that they sometimes end with a laughing yoga session when you have finished felting your yoga mat, sometimes couples work together on a raw wool carpet. Elvira Altdorf has infected many course participants with her enthusiasm for the felting craft. She keeps inviting other instructors to various felting and other events, for example István Vidák (Blueprint), Heidi Greb (felting with raw wool), Sven Backstein (concrete art),

Sabine Reichert-Kassube (felted footwear) and Helene Weinold (passament buttons).

A Heartfelt Project: the Summer Week

Very dear to her heart is the annual so-called »summer week« that Elvira Altdorf has been offering since 2009: »...five wellness days or power-felting«, as she calls it. She assists her students in realizing their individual fashion ideas – either shoes, hats, bags, wall hangings, jewelry or felted fabrics that will be cut-out and sewn for clothing at a later date. Some enthusiastic felters have taken part in every meeting and they rejoice in the familiar atmosphere, when Heinz Altdorf lends a hand with the fulling of large-sized pieces or her grown-up children prepare the meals for the creatives.

A Drape Becomes a Vest

Discarded, grown unfashionable but still cherished clothes or interior accessories like cushion covers rise to a new life in Elvira's studio during upcycling-workshops. »I have seen a silk-painted drape turn into a vest with a bobbin lace insert and a silver clasp or a traditional Janker upgraded with felted applications«, she remembers, adding: »It must be for a reason that you can't bear to discard a certain item. Moreover, upcycling is helpful to preserve resources and the environment, since consumerism becomes more consciously sustainable. All in all, you can't ever lose!

Engagement for Handicrafts

Whoever works with Elvira Altdorf immediately senses how much she loves what she's doing. Quality, however, is her first and foremost concern: Sloppily laid out fibers or badly fulled felt don't stand a chance. For many years, therefore, she has engaged herself in a professional textile designer training in the handicrafts with regard to feltmaking and she was one of the members who set up new regulations from 2009 to 2011. In 2010 she was appointed Federal Expert for the new order in this special field. »Since 2011 there are apprenticeships«, she says. »After the journeyman's exam you can strive for the title of master craftsman or –woman, of course.« ☞ Elvira Altdorf is very sorry that so many markets and exhibitions where she can show her product range had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. She did not resign herself but organized on-the-spot outdoor shows with well known artists and designers on her own

big property that drew several hundred guests during one single weekend.

Trips Abroads and Choir Song

Now she is pleased that markets and fairs have re-opened. She presented extravagant felt fashion at the Marché Coup d'Œur in Limbourg, Belgium and at the Europe Market in Aachen. Also travelling – just a couple of weeks ago to Greenland – and choir singing she greatly enjoys after this long, inadvertent break. In her creative work as in her singing or seeing the world she lives up to her motto: »Hearts and eyes see a lot and inspire everybody's soul.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 50-51

Of Fox, Hare and Hedgehog

Animals are Annette Koffer's passion

»These toy animals have such trusting eyes«, a colleague once said about Annette Koffer's little wooly animals. Docile asses, a watchful owl or a sly fox – the 42-year old artist makes them with great passion and love for detail. »I love to make animals with just needle and thread«, she says, adding: »For eyes I use either tiny glass eyes or beads.« Four years ago the social worker first encountered felting during her work. At the »Filzblüte« she deepened her knowledge. This small initiative in Aachen help disabled people to make felted items. Since then she has been exploring the endless possibilities that feltmaking provides. »Painting with wool is both relaxing and intriguing«, she claims. »I found again what I had cherished so much during my art studies, i.e. how comfortable and balancing creative work can be«, Annette Koffer describes the effect. Before she became a social worker she had studied Art at the University of Maastricht.

Boundless Imagination

The artists is inspired by nature and her family. Together with her husband and two children and a big she-dog she lives at the edge of a forest near Aachen. »My kids and their boundless imagination energize me to try out new things and

to implement their ideas«, she tells us. She loves best to felt animals, plants or flowers, making them into little crowns or small boxes or sheaths.

«I combine needle-felting with sewing and I work almost exclusively with Merino wool, fleece, strand wool and wool felt«, she recounts her choice of material. With »Wolltier« she founded her own small label under which she sells her art. She also felts on order.

»Sometimes, with intricate animal motifs I have to look up how it looks in the first place«, she chuckles, citing the order to make a Katta as a fine example. Now she knows it is a lemur from Madagascar from the proboscis monkey family. »To transpose ideas and wishes is always exciting and I love needling images with wool«, she says enthusiastically. One big wish, however, is as yet unfulfilled: »I dream of a joint working studio with a lot of space for courses, creative exchange and a beautiful, sunlit working place.« We hope with her that this dream will come true!

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 52-55

Tutorial: Hand Lantern With a Seam of Curls

In no time at all a quaint glass container turns into an attractive hand lantern with just a few grams of fine wool and some decorative wool curls. Helene Weinold tells us step by step how it is made. This little lantern fits every home style.

Material

- A bigger glass container with a wide rim (e.g. an old preserving jar or a vase with straight walls)
- Wensleydale wool in fleece (size depending on the container's size)
- Wool curls (e.g. of Wensleydale, Teeswater or Wallis Black Nose sheep)
- Bubble or sound insulation foil for the resist
- Felting Equipment: skidproof mat, bubble foil, gauze, ball sprinkler, warm water, soap, towel, vinegar.

Instructions

1 Bigger, wide-rimmed glass containers and straight walls are suitable for this kind of storm lantern. Also preservation jars in a tulip shape can be felted around. Important: The opening must be sufficiently large so that the wool curls at the upper edge don't catch fire from the candle. Put the chosen container onto the bubble- or sound insulation foil for the resist and cut it in such a way that on both sides and at the bottom the foil sticks out half the width of the container in each part. On top the foil should protrude at least the container's full height. The purpose is that the wool curls for the decorative curly seam at the upper edge are laid out on the foil itself and not beyond it. Otherwise the tips would mat and would have to be cut apart which ruins the decoration.

2 Spread a big piece of bubble foil on the skid-proof mat. It has to be so big that the foil can be folded over the workpiece. Lay out a real thin layer of fleece wool on the resist and have the fibers stick out a bit over the edges. The wool on top must be laid out markedly over the initial height of the container so the lantern sheath won't be too short after felting.

3 Place a row of wool curls with the shearing side on the laid-out wool. To the top the curls hang free. Cover the little »feet«, i.e. the shearing side of the locks with some wool fibers to secure them further.

4 Wet the wool with water from the ball sprinkler. Fold the bubble foil over the work piece and turn it around with the foil. Take the bubble foil away from the side that is now facing upwards.

5 Fold over the fibers that stick out beyond the resist's edge on the sides and below.

6 Distribute the folded-over fibers in such a way that they lie even and don't bulge.

7 Cover the resist at the part that is free of fibers with a sheer layer of fleece wool and have only very few fibers protruding. Decorate the upper rim again with curls.

8 Wet the wool, spread the bubble foil over it and press the air out of the wool with both hands.

9 The laid-out wool should not form thick layers: The more delicately you lay out the wool the better the candlelight shimmers through the lantern's cover.

10 Put a further thin wool layer onto both lantern sides and lay the protruding fibers out closely alongside. Important: Rather lay out two very thin layers instead of one thick one, the result will be all the more transparent and delicate.

11 Spread the gauze over the work piece and glide over it lightly with a piece of soap. Then felt the wool below the gauze by rubbing it gently. When the fibers start to mat turn the workpiece around and felt on the other side in the same manner.

12 As soon as no more fibers can be pulled out of the felted areas remove the gauze and treat the lantern sheath further by rubbing it with both hands. Take away the resist as soon as the sheath gets narrower and the resist starts to shrivel up.

13 Open the felted sheath and fold it at a 90° angle compared to the initial position so that the other edges of the resist can be treated smoothly and evenly as well. Continue to pull the sheath over the glass container to check the correct fit. If the sheath is too long shorten it by fulling it from the bottom up in the direction of the locks. If it is too wide roll it across from one side's edge to the next. The lantern sheath should only be fitted to the glass and not too firmly fulling, let alone thrown, so it retains its transparent and filigree character.

14 When the sheath can be pulled over the glass tightly and the height fits as well rinse it in clear water. Put some vinegar in the last rinse to neutralize all remaining soap suds. Then roll the sheath carefully into a towel and press as much moisture out as possible. Then pluck the curls in shape with your fingers.

15 Pull the lantern sheath over the turned-over glass container and let it dry in shape.

16 Put a tea light into the finished lantern. Take care that no curls hang inside the glass to catch fire. It is

better to use a LED tea light or a tiny, battery-powered chain of lights as a source of light.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 56-57

Finnschaf Finn Sheep

History

These ancient land sheep are the only breed in Finland of any economical value. They belong to the Nordic Short Tailed Sheep and are still closely related to wild sheep. Because of their high fecundity and the genetically set down short tail Finn sheep are often cross-bred into other breeds. In New Zealand, for instance, Merinos are cross-bred with Finn Sheep to keep their tails short to avoid tail-docking or mulesing.

Characteristics

The sheep is mostly all-white, of middle height, fine-boned, mostly hornless and its head grows no wool. The small ears stick out horizontally, the nose bridge is straight. Sometimes you can find grey, black or brown animals. The rams weigh 68 to 90 kg, the ewes are lighter at 55 to 86 kg. Their fecundity is considerable, they can have multiple births, often even more than two lambs.

Wool

The Finn Sheep wool is quaint, irregularly wavy and has an open staple structure. The staples can be taken apart easily. The wool feels incredibly soft and silky and has a beautiful sheen. Sensitive people adapt well to its skin compatibility.

Facts

Wool yield	1.8 – 3.6 kg
Staple length, one shearing	7.5 - 15 cm
Staple length, two shearings	7.5 - 10 cm
Fiber coarseness	23 - 31 µm

Felting Tests

5 g wool and 20 g wool each were laid out to form a 20 cm x 20 cm square and felted. Since the fibers are very short it is quite a toil to lay out the wool evenly. But it wets well and the first matting happens really fast. The felt doesn't shrink much, which was to be expected with short fibers. The fine fibers render a very firm, dense felt which keeps a beautiful grain due to the wavy character.

Wool amount	Lay out meas.	End meas.	Shrink. factor
5 g	20 x 20 cm	15 x 15.5 cm	1.33
20 g	20 x 20 cm	16.5 x 16.5 cm	1.21

Conclusion

If I felted clothing I think I'd have found my new favorite wool. Finn sheep wool is incredibly fine and soft, you want to jump into it. Anyone looking for European fine wool I can only recommend the Finn Sheep wool. It is also suitable for delicate short furs. Unfortunately it is not easy to obtain in Germany.

MARGIT RÖHM

PAGES 58-59

Felts From The Desert Sand

A noteworthy exhibition drew Mari Nagy and István Vidák to Berlin. The textile researchers report on the most ancient felt objects in the world

15 years ago, a rare and unusual exhibition about the »Origins of the Silk Road« was shown in Berlin. It held many surprises for the visitors. Also we – Mari Nagy and István Vidák – were there and we would like to present some excerpts from our notes.

Discovery of Ancient Settlements

The Tarim Basin is nothing else but a huge sand desert. It used to be a part of Uiguristan and since 1949 it has been part of China. In the hot sand preservation was similarly good as for

items in the frozen graves of the regal Scythes. Next to graves the archeologists found many early settlements in the desert. There is still a lot to excavate there. The exhibition that brought to mind these ancient folks' everyday life showed many objects and tools, accompanied by very informative texts. People interested in textiles or feltmaking found a wealth of beautiful stuff. Taking photographs was not allowed and the copyright for the catalogue wouldn't allow any other use. For this article we show drawings of some of the more than thousand years old objects.

Felted Shoes Strengthened With Leather

This footwear, dated between 206 to 220 B.C., was found near the town Hotan in the surroundings of the Sampula settlement. The shoe is made from three flat felt pieces which were cut out with a knife or scissors from a bigger felt piece. The cutting edges are clearly visible. The shoe's build-up is identical to today's leather shoes. It has a sole, a back and a front part and a tongue connected to the front part. It was meant for a short use only. The seams are coarse, every half centimeter there is a fixing stitch. The front part was first made and was covered with thin leather that is folded inside one centimeter. The colored raw leather is 0.2 mm thick, the thread twisted from two strands 1 mm. The inner felted lining is 6 mm thick and of a natural brown color. At the tip a thin leather cord has been inserted which is bound to a knot. On covered and thus light-protected areas the leather is of a yellowish brown. The mordant methods are unknown. Making such simple kids' shoes could have required only four to five hours.

Felted Headgear

These two caps were also found near the Sampula settlement and their age is similar to that of the children shoes mentioned above. Their height is 26 cm, the head circumference 56 cm. They are part of the collection of the Uigur Historical Museum in Urumqi. Both caps are three to four millimeters thick. One is red with a torn lining and has no patterns. The other is the color of camels' hair and lined with linen. Both have an opening at the backside, we think for braided hair. The caps are sewn together from two flat pieces. There are two additional lines of stitches at their lower edge, which fasten the lower edges as well as the lining.

A 4000 Year-Old Blanket

This object, dated 2200 to 2100 B.C., is a true rarity. The blanket has a felted-in pattern and is lightly compressed. It was found in the vicinity of the Hami village when a village buried in the sand was excavated. The red and blue sheep wool was arranged in a square pattern, possible made by light kneading during feltmaking. At the backside is natural-colored wool. The upper, patterned side is slightly askew. The whole blanket measures 137 x 95 centimeters.

From Mirror Casing to Stockings

The exhibition »Origins of the Silk Road« shows many facets of bygone life. Many items could be assigned to the dwellings buried in sand. Walking further on in the exhibition space we found other felted objects: a mirror casing, a saddle, stockings, a festive headdress, a leather bag with a felt cover for a bow. We truly hope that these objects, kept in Urumqi, Uiguristan's capital, will be shown in a European museum again in the near future.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

PAGES 60-62

Creative on Crete

Former students of the Oberrot Felting Training have met again on Crete – a relaxed, inspired exchange

After our final show at the Oberrot Felting School in 2019 we very much looked forward to our next felting adventure together. It finally happened: In the beginning of May 2022 our two-week felting trip to Crete came true. With our instructor Kerstin Scherr we dove into a different world and had a dreamlike harmonious and, of course, creative time together.

The Cretian Composure

Kerstin was already there and met us in Kalamaki. One thing was clear from the first moment – she had already adapted to the proverbial Greek *ablomb*. To start right away? No, Sir. Instead: A leisurely arrival, calming down, breathing in the wonderful air, admiring the great landscape, the immense blue sky and the sea.

☞ The first and all following evenings we ended our day in a typical Greek

restaurant at the beach, spectacular sunsets included. The next day we were still allowed to settle down and to take in the surroundings, crowned by a hike to Pitsidia.

Felted Color Explosions

Then we got started. We stored the wool we had brought along in our workshop. The next days we prepared trial samples and pre-felts for small objects in relief technique. The diverse and effectful results were greeted with a lot of enthusiasm. After a morning walk along the coast we literally let colors explode in our feltmaking, we were all on a creative high. You could hear words of praise and pride all around.

A Dream Island

Of course feltmakers can get together any other place, too. Why Crete then? It was the zest of life by which we were immediately taken and urged on. The beautiful setting, being together, evening talks. With her special ways, Kerstin Scherr managed to pull us out of our everyday lives and to immerse ourselves instead on island life, to imbue our aspirations and to assist us greatly in the felting studio. Thanks so much fort hat. I am still smiling when I think of the good times we had, Kerstin and the feltmakers Barbara, Anne und Silke.

In Love With a Poncho

In the second week we – Ruthild and Sigrid speaking – experienced the utmost luxury in a two-to one mentoring. Kerstin took out all hassle and pressure and we enjoyed our felting time like a holiday. We always went on short excursions, hikes and gave a lot of room to culinary breaks and beach-hopping. But I hadn't travelled to Crete for no reason. Three years ago, I fell in love with Kerstin's grey poncho: two layers of silk with small amounts of wool and reserve areas with cotton jersey in between. Now I wanted to make such a poncho myself. Kerstin was of great help during the trial sessions, pattern calculations and the choice of what to use from my own hand-dyed fabrics and colors. She was always there wenn matters of technique had to be addressed and all in all she turned out to be the perfect poncho companion.

Hardcore Felting at the Mediterranean?

I, Sigrid, had fallen for Kalamaki half a year before on a holiday which made me immediately apply for the trip. Is there

anything better than hardcore felting at the Mediterranean? After two days, Kerstin's »relaxation seed« had finally rooted in me, and with many new and exciting impressions regarding the island and its people we started feltmaking in a totally laid-back manner. I decided to give room to learning new techniques and to experiment, issues that were much encouraged and helped along by Kerstin. To make relief-like surfaces with pre-felts was fascinating. The resulting tiles do indeed mirror the omnipresent landscape reliefs of Kalamaki's surroundings.

Felting on Create is a Treat

What have I learned from the felting trip with Kerstin? Felting can be different. To satisfy curiosity, to get into all what happens and the artistic process. Kerstin's concept hit the mark. Languid pleasure-felting in a gay atmosphere and in the great company of experienced feltmakers who shared their sympathy as generously as their expertise. A time where nothing had to happen but all that could happen was welcome. Rarely ever have I returned home so utterly content.

ANTJE LUTZER, RUTHILD SCHULZE AND SIGRID HERSCHELMANN

PAGE 63

Felted Chestnuts Among Roses

In co-operation with a florist, Steph Selke felted a unique and very personal decoration for a burial plot

My father always loved flowers, his garden and nature in general. He was a passionate collector of stones, sticks and blossom and many other things nature provides. The things he collected were arranged in the garden or inside our home in vases.

☞ Shortly before he passed away in the hospital my father spent another three days at home. He watched the leaves fall through the window. When I paid him my last visit in the hospital I brought along some of those leaves. In his last hours we put them in his lap. The next day, my mother found a chestnut in one of his jacket pockets. In my grief I had the idea to integrate felted leaves and chestnuts

in a classical wreath or other burial decoration. The florist from the flower shop »Blumen Waldfee« who decorated the urn was immediately taken by my plan.

Feltmaking as a Means to Deal with Grief

So I went to work. I felted around some chestnuts and laid out wool for a bigger felt area to cut the leaves out of eventually. As leaf models I used more of the fallen leaves. I felted the surface only lightly. After cutting out the leaves out I treated each single one separately in the sink by hand. The hours in my studio amounted to a kind of mourning therapy. I kept thinking about the days before the last farewell. I saw his beloved tree with different eyes and found a way to say good-bye that brought his memory back. ♡ The single felted elements were worked into the urn decoration with a lot of feeling and taste by the florist. I am very grateful for our working together. This individual decoration also shows how well felt art and floristry match.

STEPH SELKE

PAGES 64-65

Fascinating Straw Art

Delicate straw sculptures hanging from the ceiling – in Finland, the so-called Himmeli are very popular in the Advent and Christmas season. These pyramid-shaped mobiles, artfully knotted from sticks of straw and threads adorn also other festive occasions like births or weddings. It is said that their delicate movements bring good luck. In her book »Himmeli - dreidimensionale Objekte aus Stroh (Himmeli – three-dimensional straw objects)« the Finnish artist Eija Koski

brings this traditional handicraft to new life. By means of 30 different models and instructions she shows how these unique interior decorations are made and describes myths and customs around the Himmeli.

Nordic Knitting for the Entire Family

In his first knitting book »Vikking Strikk« Lasse L. Matberg shows traditional Norwegian knitting techniques and patterns and how to make cozy sweaters. Multicolored Norwegian and braid patterns inspired by Viking art or modern structure and pearl patterns – this book contains a great variety of instructions for Scandinavian-style fashion for women, men and children. You can choose from elegant, laid-back pullovers, beautiful cardigans and warm accessories for each season. The author comes from an artisan family, where working with your hands has been highly valued for generations. His mother and grandmother knitted for the whole family, sweaters, gloves, caps or scarves. The Norwegian influencer shows his favorite pieces in this book. The practical instructions for the different garments and accessories were designed by the Norwegian knitting collective »Strickmekka«, Lasse and his family are modeling.

Who's Hiding Here?

»This book is empty, isn't it? Is the little hamster hiding somewhere? Daniel Fehr's picture book with exciting pop-ups is a lot of fun for grown-up and small kids alike. In the course of the book, more and more hamsters appear. Lindsey Thomas has felted the little animals that illustrate

the book. The London artist, born 1975, studied illustration before she discovered felting. Since then she brings the animals she draws to life, like these cuddly hamsters.

Bewitching Decorations from Wool and Other Natural Materials

Sweet tiny mice, cheeky squirrels or cool penguins – with Lydia Klös' felt minis, felt enthusiasts can busy themselves throughout the year. Thanks to a detailed basic manual the small decorations can be made fast and simple even by beginners. The author uses natural materials she collects herself, from stones or shells to little acorn hats. With a felting needle, some wool and the instructions you can make snow men in winter, bird houses in spring, ladybugs in summer or appetizing chanterelles in the fall.

The Most Beautiful Stitches in One Book

With her new book »Sticken – die große Bibliothek der schönsten Stiche« Anne Mende presents a new standard work for true embroidery fans. The author explains more than 200 modern stitches in detail and convincing step-by-step illustrations. A well-arranged basic part offers valuable information before you start your own embroidery project. The creative ideas are limitless. Those who still pine for more inspiration will surely find something suitable in the 40 additional motif instructions designed by the author herself.

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