

filzfun – The English Supplement

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SPECTRUM

2 6 Out of the Felt and Textile Scene

EVENTS

2 8 A Dream Come True

3 10 Precious Textiles in Augsburg

EXHIBITIONS

3 11 Hand in Hand

4 14 Hidden Treasures

4 18 Earth Signs and Shadow Plays

WORKSHOPS AND MASTERCLASSES

5 20 Strudelpott and Shoulder Bag

ARTISTS' PORTRAITS

5 24 Mark Bevan: Healing Heart

7 32 Charity van der Meer-Musoma: A Celebration of Textile Techniques

9 44 Constanze Habringer-Krög: Like a Snowy Landscape

TUTORIALS

6 29 Pumpkin with a Curled Stem

7 38 Shimmering Textured Reversible Top

10 48 Cuddly Lambs

PROJECTS

10 50 Felt making for Peace

11 54 Joyous Feltmaking with Mrs. Feltmiller

SHEEP & WOOL

11 56 To Broaden a Felter's Horizon

FELTING TRIP

12 59 West Hungary Felt Tour

FELTING HISTORY

13 62 Felt Blankets From Kopriwtschtiza

REVIEWS

14 64 Books

Dear Readers,

meditative, relaxing, balancing – those who love to felt know about the positive effects of felt making. This time we portray the Canadian felter Mark Bevan. The craft helped him through a difficult phase of his life. He tells the story of the »healing heart« and why not a single day goes by without him felting (page 24 ff.). The artist Constanze Habringer-Krög describes a feeling of security, warmth and protection in her dealings with the material wool. The Austrian talks about how she finally found her personal style (page 44 ff.). Charity van der Meer-Musoma, born in Zambia, presents a veritable feast of technical techniques with her wearable art. In her collections she likes to combine felt and knitwear to create inspiring, stupendous garments (page 32 ff.). The artist Maria Friese was invited to show her dreamlike costume at the »World of Wearable Art Show« 2022 in New Zealand (page 8/9).

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.

We report on a farther, outstanding felt project as of page 50: From 600 single contributions from more than 380 participants from 23 countries a huge »peace tapestry« was made. The felt artist Corinna Nitschmann has called this extraordinary project into life. Here she takes us back to the time the big-sized carpets were put together, felted and connected. Also, the exhibits »Hand in Hand«, »T.O.P. Secret« and »Beneath the Surface« demonstrate how diverse and complex the felters' scene is (page 11 ff.). Some other motivations are in store in our tutorials: colorful pumpkins, cute spring lambs or a shimmering reverse top by Charity van der Meer-Musoma. We would appreciate it if you sent us your own elaborations, not only on the current themes but also on those from previous instructions. We wish you successful felting and fun reading the *filzfun* 78!

*Best regards,
Your filzfun-Team*

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Art in the Last Corner

The Kreismuseum Zons called artists from the Rhein-Kreis Neuss to show their objects in the »last corner« of the museum. This small, hardly ever used room which formerly brought up the museum's rear became a highlight of the premises. The felt artist Angela Teuchert takes part in the show and will present felted human and animal heads, all in their own unmistakable character. She concentrates her artistic endeavors on making sculptures and images from wool with intricate surface structures. Another great concern of hers is discussing societal and political themes.
kreismuseumzons.de

Bright Textiles from Peru

The German Textilmuseum Krefeld shows the exhibit titled »Peru – Ein Katzensprung (Peru – A Stone's Throw). A rare collection of pre-Columbian textiles« until April 23rd 2023. A total of more than 280 textile objects impresses the visitors with their shining colors and both figurative and abstract depictions and patterns. The variety offers a detailed overview of the used techniques, materials and tools. A period of more than 2000 years of textile history springs to life.
deutschestextilmuseum.de

Coral workshop with Saar Snoek

During the pandemic, a great communal work was made in The Netherlands: a felted coral reef (see also *filzfun* issue 2/2020) Mathilde Pielkenrood from the felting organization Viltkontaktgroep (VKG) realized the big-size felt work with her VKG members, the focus of which is our endangered nature. From April 21st on until the middle of August 2023, the six fabulous coral panels are hosted by the felto – Filzwelt in Soltau. The kick-off is a two-day coral workshop with Saar Snoek on April 22nd and 23rd 2023. The artist won the World of Wearable Art Award in 2017 with a coral costume.

Please find all relevant details for the workshop and the application under info@filzwelt-soltau.de
saarsnoek.nl/workshops.html

Join In – Felt Installations by Heike Fink

Heike Fink brings about 3000 (felted) stones from Prud'homme (Canada) with her to Soltau. As a playful room installation, they are the centerpiece of a show named »Like a Rolling Stone – Living Area With a Wealth of Stones«, which apart from the felted stones presents also felted animal sculptures and figurines from April 21st until mid-August 2023. During Fink's artist-in-residence presence over some weeks in June many actions for active public participation are planned. The event is sponsored by the Canada Council for the Arts.
filzwelt-soltau.de

Award-Winning Knittel Jumper from Island Sheep Wool

The pullover model »Insa«, made from sheep wool of the North Sea island Föhr won the Special Mention Award in the category »Lifestyle & Fashion« at the German Design Award. Shiona Rizza, already well-known by her knitting artfully designed the hand-knitted jumper for the label »mährle Wolle«. The label speaks for fair wool prices and promotes local shepherds and their work. The yarns for the price-worthy garment were all made in Germany.
maehrle-wolle.de

European Felting Encounter in France

In Felletin, a small French town in the Department Creuse the seventh rerun of the »Journées Européennes du Feutre« takes place on April 14th and 16th 2023. Since 2009, the »Association Felletin Patrimoine Environnement« has been

organizing a biennial felting encounter since 2009. Felt enthusiasts from all over the world are welcome. On schedule are again felt art exhibits, a fashion show and a market with art objects sold by felt artists, artisans and pertaining goods.
journeesdufeutre.wixsite.com/felletin

A Dream Come True

Maria Friese finally made it – one of her felt costumes was presented at the »World of Wearable Art Show« in New Zealand in 2022

For a long time, I have been wishing to see my art on a professional stage. In 2022 this dream finally came true. My suit was shown on the stage of the »World of Wearable Art Show« in Wellington, New Zealand.

☞ I began designing the costume in 2017, during a time of change and self-discovery in my life. I wanted to render it very personal. The original inspiration source was the drawing of a seed pod by the zoologist, artist and philosopher Ernst Haeckel, which fascinated me by its ambivalence. On one hand, the pod seems like a restricting cage; on the other it is reminding of a kind of protective device for an inner life force that longs for expansion and growth.

A Protective Shell

The suit mirrors this idea. It can be perceived as confining for the person wearing it. The mask limits the field of vision, movement is restricted. You cannot take wide steps. In our life we often create protective shields. They might prove useful for our survival. One day, the shell becomes too narrow, it confines our development, our expansion. But at the same time, within the shell a transformative force awakens. And when the time is ripe, the outer sheath drops and the full life force emerges. From a »costume of fear« the garment has developed into a »priestess of transformation«.

☞ Felt making in itself is a transformative process. Hands turn loose wool fibers into a firm texture. From a fiber chaos we establish a different order; so, something unique and entirely new will emerge. Likewise, I felt the transformation within myself.

Costume Climax

My felt journey began in 2003 with the study of surfaces that I developed further through experiments with precise reliefs over the course of the years and constructions of complex 3 D sculptures. During this period, I kept looking for new challenges and I exceeded my limits. The costume is the climax of all those phases. It is made in wet-felting technique from 100 % Merino wool. For me, the making of this garment is proof that everything is possible, within the realm of this technique and also in life itself.

Maria Friese

Maria Friese was born in Germany and studied at the University of Applied Arts in Schneeberg/Saxonia. Since 2005 the freelance designer, felt artist and art therapist has been living in a small village in the Southwest of France.
heart-transformation.com

The WOW Show

Annually, the World of Wearable Art Show in Wellington, New Zealand takes place for three weeks. New Zealand's biggest theatre production combines an international competition for wearable art with a spectacularly staged show.
worldofwearableart.com

MARIA FRIESE

PAGE 10

Precious Textiles in Augsburg

After a two year-long break many visitors came to the Textilmarkt (Textile Market) in Augsburg

Textile art, design and textile handicraft in sophisticated forms were presented by 65 artisans, textile artists and fashion designers in Augsburg's State Textile and Industrial Museum (tim) in the late fall. After two years of standstill, the market finally opened its doors again. About 8000 visitors rejoiced in the highly individual clothing, hats, home decoration textiles, leather goods, jewelry, interactive presentations and workshops in the historic halls of the former Augsburg worsted yarn spinning mill.

Seamless Sculptures and Wall Objects

At this occasion, some exhibitors from the felt making scene were present as well. The artist Dagmar Binder from the Textillabor in Berlin showed her unique textile objects and seamless felt designs. She shapes seamless, 3-D sculptures that can be used as scarves, fashionable accessories or wall objects.

☞ Ruth Zenger from Buchenhof finds inspiration for her felted clothing and objects in natural shapes and structures.
☞ Again, nature is paradigmatic in Tina Boster's felted products. In her small factory Wiesengrün she fashions interior decorations like felted flowers or wreaths, but also bags and mobile phone casings.
☞ Tina Bosler showed her objects at the Textilmarkt in the tim for the first time, as well as Constanze Fehsenfeld from Kaufbeuren. The latter makes beautiful carpets, sitting cushions and bags, all custom-made and of timeless aesthetics. The carpets are sewn by hand and can be used on both sides.

☞ The next textile market in the tim will presumably take place on November 25th/26th 2023. Interested parties will find all pertaining information under textilmarkt-im-tim.de

BARBARA BODE

PAGES 11-13

Hand in Hand

The traveling show presents 47 textile objects which were made in co-operation by Afghan embroidery and European textile artists.

In German, the expression »Hand in Hand« can take on the following meaning: Somebody started something that is being continued or finished by a second person. This perfectly describes the embroidery program Guldusi, the concept of which is earmarked for an Afghan embroiderer to start the creative work and a for a European artistic counterpart to complete it. The 47 textile objects in the »Hand in Hand« show all incorporated at least one embroidered hand image made in Afghanistan. The result is communally achieved, a bridge between the cultures. »Hand in Hand« is the latest exhibit of the Guldusi embroidery program, where all textile

techniques are represented, last but not least felt making.

☞ Two women made one communal object each for the show and report on their experiences:

Taking Part in the Exchange

Who doesn't know them by now, the artful, brightly colored embroideries by Afghan women of the Guldusi program? The invitation to tender inspired us on the spot and we decided to take part. We are five women from the »Filzwerk Odenwald« who have been felting together for more than 25 years, in other words: »hand in hand«.

☞ For the Afghan women embroidering is a substantial contribution to the family income and at the same time an opportunity to communicate with the world outside. Their work in turn offers us a glimpse into their life. By integrating the embroidered images in our felt objects, we were able to participate in that cultural exchange together.

Mulberry Harvest

We decided upon a picture story showing scenes from an Afghan family's everyday life. Eight such pictures show the cultivation, harvest and processing of mulberries. We agreed upon taking up the embroideries' coloring in eight wool images and to design and structure the latter with different felting techniques. Each of us made single pictures which we felted together to form a big communal one. The display format, a kind of advertising column, takes up the communicative aspect again.

The Circle as a Symbol

Since it was not my first time to answer a call for proposals for a Guldusi project, I passed on the idea to make a joint object to our creative group, consisting of eight women from the textile, spinning and felters' scene. We ordered the beautiful embroideries. At the next meeting we quickly settled on a circle as the most perfect of all forms. It can be seen as a symbol for our Earth and corresponds beautifully with the »Hand in Hand« theme. We wanted the object to hang freely, which meant we had to design both sides. Since we don't live close to each other we decided that each member should make one section all by herself. We cut two paper circles in eight pieces so each could take her »pattern« home. The next time we met, the single pieces were put together like a collage. After our »globe« had been sent to and fro a

couple of times we held an exceptional, intricately made textile world in our hands. Each member did not only work in their handicraft skills in but also her spirit, personal inner images and connotations.

CHRISTINE HANEL, CLAUDIA ARNDT
AND PASCALE GOLDENBERG

PAGES 14-17

Hidden Treasures

In the fall of 2011, an impressive exhibition organized by the Northeast Felt makers Guild (NEFG) took place in Bedminster, New Jersey in the US. The motto »Beneath the surface« inspired the members to create highly individual artwork

»The exhibition title is meant to be open to interpretation and is a play on words hinting at the possibilities of creating layers of meaning with layers of fibers«, explains Kerstin Katko, a NEFG member and a volunteer at the Center for Contemporary Art (CCA) in Bedminster, where the show was held.

»Some artists took the exhibition title more literally, creating pieces that were seemingly seen beneath the surface of the ocean or below the surface of the earth. »Some works involved many layers with holes or sheer areas hinting at the layers below, while others interpreted the theme in a more psychological sense – e.g., a hornet's nest on the theme of anxiety or a vessel based on the theme of memories«, Kerstin Katko describes the various artistic approaches.

»A total of 46 artists entered a total of 100 works of art. Two jurors, CCA curator Wes Sherman and the felt artist Pat Spark chose 55 works by 37 artists to be hung in the galleries.

Outstanding Works

Entered work varied from needle and wet felted sculptures and vessels to two-dimensional felted and Joomchi tapestries. As per CCA director Cyndi Wish: »People really responded to Rachel Montroy's needle felted floral sculpture titled »Allure« and loved Debbie Penley's »Leafy Sea Dragon«, a highly detailed wet felted sea creature«. Also, Robin Blackney-Carlson's watercolor-like piece called »At the Edge« was much admired by the public.

Employees of the CCA chose Joy Muller-McCoola's »Running Out II«, a large stone and water tapestry and Cathy Schalk's »A Bug's Life«, a whimsical needle felted peek into the secret life of ants, as their favorites. Juror Wes Sherman mentioned that Denise Kooperman's felted tapestry »Patchwork of a Life«, Sara Pearsall's »Birch Stand« (a modern landscape with polymer clay and bead accents) and Marsha Biderman's »Road Kill« (found litter felted and embellished with quills and beads) were among his favorites.

Unexpected Exhibit

Not only with regard to the individual artistic approach, but also to the felting techniques and materials used the range was astounding. »Some artists combined wool with unexpected materials such as polymer, porcupine quills, plant roots and fibers, mulberry papers and found objects«, Kerstin Katko tells us. It was to this versatility of the medium with its surprising aspects that people really responded. She recalls: »I was hanging the artwork when some of CCA's art students were coming in to their classes and saw how amazed they were that everything they saw was made from felted wool, something they had hardly ever seen or heard of.«

The NEFG

The »Northeast Feltmakers Guild« (NEFG) was founded in 2002 to unite US felt makers especially in the Northeast. The association aspires to promote felt art, to raise public awareness of the felting process and to be an information and exchange platform for felters.

Beneath the surface

The NEFG guild is showing all works created for the exhibition on its website gallery: northeastfeltmakersguild.org/exhibitions/beneath-the-surface

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 18-19

Earth Signs and Shadow Plays

An exhibition titled »T.O.P. Secret« by the three artists Pascale Goldenberg, Gabi Mett and Judith Mundwiler was shown in the textile collection Max Berk in Heidelberg-Ziegelhausen

The three artists, also known under the name Textile Open Project (T.O.P.) showed an astounding variety of their combined art works in the Textilsammlung Max Berk. The objects, installations and depicted art were presented as a communal ensemble. On the exhibition tour it became immediately clear that the materials in question played a crucial role in every respect.

Exciting Shadow Plays

Judith Mundweiler showed mainly paper works. Representative for a range of works made of tea-bags, let us take a closer look at objects from the series »Lockdown«. The artist describes it as follows: »I made this series in the spring of 2020. The days of the Pandemic had their own steady rhythm, sometimes they seemed to be the same over and over again, downright boring at times. But they also mirror this exceptional period, where in the global and social standstill each day went by as the one before. Empty tea bags were set up in a row like the days of the lockdown.

»The tea bags were opened, the content was removed and collected. Then the empty bags were sewn together as time went by. In a next step the artist painted the basic elements of 80 x 100 centimeters with Gesso and luminescent pigments. With each different play of light and according to the light source itself this resulted in intricate, always different shadow plays.

Earth Signs on Paper

Gabi Mett works with paper and/or fabrics. Only lately she has been using various earth pigments from her immediate surroundings to color the surfaces. The big earth signs were painted spontaneously and propelled by intuition on fabric. The circle as a connecting element stands for perfection as it is, and for the planet that provides such vivid coloring. In a further range of fabric and paper objects she documented the result of her projects from the last

two years under the title »Unter meinen Füßen (Below my feet)« and »Die Sprache der Erden (The Language of the Earth)«.

Conceptual Art

The artist Pascale Goldenberg positions herself in the realm of the conceptual arts. Her works are characterized by the incorporation of used fabrics. For this occasion, the results are staged with found objects from wood or metal, but mainly with driftwood. A very remarkable, forceful addition.

☞ Her »cabinet de curiosités« shows a special side of her skills. The small, cocoon-like sculptures were made with a sewing machine, a combination of hand and machine or sewed by hand altogether. Pascale Goldenberg: »The thrilling challenge was always to put together a chosen quantity of fabric waste like felt, milled material or jersey without ever using the scissors.«

GABI METT

PAGES 20-21

Strudelpott and Shoulder Bag

Corinna Nitschmann gathered felt makers from all over the world at her online felters' meeting in the fall of 2022

For a week, the participants had met online for different courses to felt together under the guidance of well-known teachers.

☞ Dagmar Binder from the Textillabor in Berlin brought along her theme, the Strudelpott, a special vessel with a rim consisting of chambers that was to be designed either brightly colored or mono chromatically. The students kept asking about Dagmar's ever bubbling up ideas which led to even more inspired efforts.

Turkish-Anatolian Felt Pattern

Mihály Vetró brought tradition into play. He showed the students how to felt a shoulder bag, complete with just one single resist or template. The bag already contains the corpus, the flap, the inside and the strap. For decorative purposes he introduced us to the inherent symbolism of traditional Turkish-Anatolian felt patterns.

☞ Bea Németh showed how to felt four-legged creatures with the resist

technique. A donkey served as a model, but of course everybody could felt whatever animal they desired. The technical principle and the detailed extras stayed the same. At the end of the day, many funny little folks hopped, sprung and ran towards us.

Fluffy Animals with Tentacles

Márta Csille introduced us to the tentacled wart pipers (Tentanklierte Warzenpiepe), a subspecies of the Fluffers. In this course, we learned about different skin structures, far reaching curling tentacles and, above all, warts of all shapes and sizes. These techniques can be adapted for many other felted objects. In a blog article (see info box) you can enhance your knowledge about the fascinating life of the wart pipers.

☞ Nadia Szabó's comfy curly collar was a fine preparation for the cold winter days. Different kinds of animal curls and locks, even fur hair from a poodle, resulted in a formidable collar parade. It was a 2in1 course: first we learned to make the pattern, then we were taught to lay out the wool for a curly surface.

Yoga for Felters

The Japan-based felt artist Jorie Johnson held an incredibly interesting lecture about felting and felt in general in the Far East. She shared the methods of combining patterns, cultural intersections, the use of felt in Japan and even the provenience of the famous »red carpet«.

☞ A great surprise was the »Psychofilz«-Program. Péter Pót, a trained helper, coach and assistant had thought out a directed meditation with the main motif »the tree of life«. The experiences won enhanced our felt making greatly. This inner journey and the objects resulted thereof was subject to a voluntary explanation in a closed group circle. Hearts and tear ducts brimmed over; deeply-rooted shadows of the past were softly shrouded in the feeling that you are never alone with your troubles.

☞ The virtual opening show with art objects made by the instructors and their live comments as well as the finissage with the participants' works framed this colorful week. The optional early morning coffee break and the bedtime treat-program in the evening added to the fun.

Felt Meeting 2023

We continue in September 2023 with the Felt Meeting no. 4 and, finally, a live felters's meeting on site in Hungary. Infos under cornitfilz.de

More about the tentacled creatures please find in Corinna Nitschmann's blog [blog.blog.cornitfilz.de/die-tentaklierte-warzenpiepe](http://blog.cornitfilz.de/die-tentaklierte-warzenpiepe)

CORINNA NITSCHMANN

PAGES 24-28

The Healing Heart

Felt making helped the artist Mark Bevan through a very difficult period in his life. Since then hardly a day goes by without him felting – preferably atmospheric landscapes

»What matters is not the perfect end product, but the process itself, in life as also in felt making«, Mark Bevan is convinced. The 57-year old Canadian first discovered felting only a year ago. Two years prior he was forced to resign from his post as a government official for health reasons. »My identity as a person was wrapped up in that role. The illness stripped me of my sense of self as I knew it and my sense of purpose was lost completely. I had to learn who I am as a person without the titles and the degrees«, he tells us. Felting gave him a framework for discovering who he was and continuously plays an important role in his healing process.

The Dream

During one of his treatments, Mark Bevan dreamt of an open-heart surgery. His heart, which had been torn apart from childhood trauma, was being symbolically mended by six surgeons. »I had an incredibly sense of being healed from within and I knew that the healing of my heart was central to my wellness«, the artist recalls. »I needed to recreate what I had seen and experienced in the dream and recreating the heart was compelling«, he says. From then on he conceived of a way to deal with the matter in an artistic way. »Nothing in my artistic repertoire seemed appropriate to re-create the heart as I had seen it in the surgery«, says Bevan, who has been active in art all his life. He paints using acrylics and likes to draw. Half a year later, when he encountered felting while researching puppets he knew immediately he had found the perfect art form. He felted his first heart. »I experimented for quite some time before I could use felting to express

myself and the world that I was seeing around me. Now I have been felting for well over 2.500 hours», he chuckles.

Daily Felting

Mark Bevan has been felting every day since. Although hearts remain important to his work, he has moved on to large felted paintings, often working up to 10 hours in a stretch. He loses himself completely while felting. »Once I get started, I find it difficult to stop«, he says, adding: »My wife and I have a little joke. She will call me for something and I will say: ›Be there in a felter's minute.‹ She laughs because she knows how long a felter's minute is.«

Natural Textures and the Incredible Light

Mark Bevan and his wife and their dog live in the small Francophone town Beaumont in Alberta, Canada. Their place is a bit outside of Edmonton city and is nestled at the foot of the lone hill that is Beaumont. In his walk-out basement he set up a studio. There is a large picture window with light that streams through. The view out of the window leads to a pond with walking trails and wildlife. »As the sun sets, the light in the room shifts which causes magic to happen on the pieces that I work on«, the artist describes the atmosphere. In his work he re-creates the nature of the surrounding landscapes of Alberta, rural architecture, mountains and lakes. With great skill he catches spectacular color and light effects with just wool and needle.

Special Effects

»Felting is, I have found, a metaphor for life. One starts with the raw material and through a series of thousands of micro events –tiny stitches with a fine needle – new shapes and forms are created. Much like a child, born with its own unique qualities, life's experiences unique moments, events and traumas shape who we become«, the father of four ruminates says. »If pain, uncertainty and work are inevitable, in life as in felting being mindful of how we treat others and ourselves is critical.«

»The biggest challenge of felt making, in his eyes, is the shifting texture of the wool and how light changes the textures in the process. »I remember working on one piece for over a week and couldn't get the texture right until I realized that it was less about what I was doing and more about how the light was tricking my eyes«, he tells.

He prefers Merino, Maori and Corriedale – wools that have been formed into batting or roving. He counts on his needles and a pair of pliers to pull apart the wool, that has been felted to create texture that is otherwise unattainable.

Inner Peace

Mark Bevan passes on his expertise in workshops now. They focus on the process of making art rather than the production of art itself. »It is not important whether the participants actually produce ›art‹, but that they will finally learn to let loose of the concept of trying to be perfect in the eyes of others«, he explains and adds: »Felting is an act of love. It is a healing experience that produces magical results.«

»It is crucial to find your innermost satisfaction and peace, and felting has helped him find them both. »When I can help others to find their joy through felting, I feel happy!«, he says, beaming.

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 29-31

Tutorial: Pumpkin with a Curled Stem

Brightly colored felt items make for beautiful table decorations. Mark Bevan shows how to make 5 small pumpkins

Material

- » carded batt: approx. 3-5 g for the primary color and approximately 0.5 g of batt for the stem
- » Felting Equipment: Felting pad, triangular felting needles size 38 and 42, 15 cm wire gauge 19, adhesive tape/Blu Tac (putty-like adhesive), pointed object to make a hole, flat nose pliers

Instructions

Pumpkins are fun to make and with a little practice can be a centerpiece for your autumn collection. Getting started early gives you a chance to stock up on these very popular items.

1 Hand card your wool by pulling it apart and laying it on top of each other in a small pile.

2 Using the tip of your # 38 needle, gently fold the outside edges into the center. Secure these pieces with slow and gentle strokes with the needle.

3 Continue working the outside edges into the center. Rotate your pad as you go and remember to lift your work up once in a while so it doesn't stick to your working surface.

4 As your pumpkin takes form, use your fingers to gently pull the fibers into the center. This will create natural indentations in the side of the pumpkin. Reinforce those indentations with your # 38 needle. Take the process slowly and be careful not to poke your finger.

5 Once your pumpkin has a look and feel that you like it's time to move onto the stem.

6 Cut approximately 15 cm of 19-gauge wire and wrap the entire length of the wire with ordinary office BluTac or adhesive tape. This will provide a sticky base for the wool.

7 Using a sharp object, poke a hole in the middle of your pumpkin. This will make it easy to insert the wire through the pumpkin so that it is secure.

8 Wrap the wire with any wool you want to use for the stem. Experimenting with different colors is fun. Leave approximately 4 cm of the wire bare and stick it into the pumpkin with the bare end first.

9 Using flat nose pliers make two twists of the bare end of the wire (bottom of the pumpkin). This should tighten the wire and hold it in place.

10 Wrap the wire with the wool you wish to use for the stem. Experiment with wrapping the wire before you attach it to the pumpkin. Both strategies work.

11 Once the wire is wrapped, put a small piece of wool of the same color as the wrapped stem around the base of the stem (top side of the pumpkin). Needle this small piece into your pumpkin and the stem so that stem and pumpkin are attached nicely.

12 Once the stem is securely attached wrap the stem around a pencil or any other cylindrical object. It should go round 2 to 3 times.

13 Remove the cylinder and gently pull the stem into a nice shape. Straighten the last 3 cm and push any wool down so that the last 3 cm of the wire are bare. Insert the tip of the stem into the side of the pumpkin and affix it by felting the wool from the stem to the pumpkin.

14 Finish the pumpkin by felting a small piece of wool over the wire on the base. Go over the rest of the pumpkin with your # 42 needle to reinforce the indentations and tidying up any loose ends.

15 Practice making little ones and bigger ones and take good care of yourself and the pumpkins. Have fun and happy felting!

TUTORIAL: MARK BEVAN

PAGES 32-37

A Celebration of Textile Techniques

The felt artist Charity van der Meer-Musoma specializes in sustainable and wearable art

»Wool is like magic to me«, knows Charity van der Meer-Musoma. The 53 year-old felt artist was born in Zambia in southern Africa. Even today the memory of her home country, where she grew up surrounded by nature, continues to inspire her work. Now she lives in a small village in the Dutch province Drenthe together with her husband and three grown-up children. She loves walking and running in the nearby forest. »The misty mornings in my rural country give me power and inspiration alike«, Charity van der Meer-Musoma claims. Her collections and projects always start with ideas and concepts, following a theme that she has been brainstorming. »I gather as much inspirations as I can. Then I leave the rest to my imagination and let the wool tell its story. Everything else emerges during the process of creation. I often find myself adding extras and textures to my projects«, the

artist describes her way of planning. She prefers working in the nuno felting technique. Over the years she developed a strong interest in knitting and felting clothes. »The two mix beautifully, this is a true celebration of textile techniques«, she says with joy.

Dreamlike Clothes

After graduating as a Fashion and Knitwear Designer at the Nottingham Trent University of Art and Design in England she perfected her own felt making style. Her mission is to create natural, sustainable and wearable garments. Her fashion line »Sharit Ethical Fashion« made it into the collection of the famous Dutch designer and trend researcher Lidewij Edelkoort. With her own collection »Dreams« she made her personal vision come true in 2015, a participation at the »African Fashion Week« in Amsterdam. »I chose several layers at full length at the back of the dresses, especially the more eccentric ones. You have to look sharply to discover the different layers, as it seems at first sight all-in-one. They seem to float over the catwalk and come to life when worn«, the artist recalls.

Worldwide Workshops

Her fashion name is Sharit, which comes from »Share-It«, which she comments as follows: »It is a great joy to me to share my art work with others, to inspire them and to stimulate their creative thinking. This made me travel around the world and teach my passion for felt making.« She hosts workshops all over the world where she passes on her skills and experiences. »In South Africa, Argentina and Uruguay I have taught women from deprived areas to make use of their own resources by showing them how to use and process their own local wool«, she reports with great enthusiasm. She is convinced: »My contact with so many cultures encourages my ideas and inspires me towards new creations.«

Durable and Ecological

Whether workshops or her own fashion are concerned: The focus lies in the use of durable and ecological products. »I am always researching the dyes to find the best environmental-friendly ones. Most of the dyes I use leave no residues«, she further explains. She mainly uses Merino wool that she often brings home from her trips to Australia, South Africa and South America, but also local wool

from the Drenthe Heath Sheep from her Drenthe home region. »All my creations are combinations of natural and/or raw materials and biological fibers. Most of the time, I like to felt in silk.« Lately she has been using a sander as a support device. »The best tools for felting are really your hands, combined with a bunch of motivation and of course a bunch of fun. When using your hands you get a good feeling for the wool and the process«, says the expert felt artist.

A New Book Project

Charity van der Meer-Musoma would love and teach felting to the whole world, and so it is no wonder that her newest project starts right there: »My dream is to publish an instruction book for felted garments so I could reach felters from all over the globe.«

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 38-43

Tutorial: Shimmering Textured Reversible Top

Charity van der Meer-Musoma presents a beautifully structured reversible top in size 38 (EU). Please find below a step-by-step tutorial how to felt this silk-decorated top

Materials

- *** Hand-dyed grey or pongee silk, 3 m x 1.10 m width for the base. (Note that in this project I used 0.5 m extra blue silk for creating variation in the centre)
- *** 2 m light grey Margilan silk
- *** 60 g hand dyed Merino wool roving
- *** Yarns
- *** Extra silk for decorations
- *** 10 g special fibres for decorating, e.g. silk or viscose
- *** Felting equipment like resist/template paper, scissors, ball sprinkler or aerosol bottle, bubble plastic foil and paint protection plastic, shade net, skid-proof mat, olive soap, water, a rolling core (e.g., pool noodle) permanent marker, sander, measuring tape, towels, a cord

Template Pattern

Draft a pattern using the above measurements with a permanent marker, drawing it on the template paper. You can use bubble foil or thin wrapping foam. You can use that top as a sample to use for further projects.

☞ The template will look more like a rectangle. I will use two measurements, the bust measurements and the length measurements. The actual waist measurements are going to be my guide for shaping the finished top. The idea is to make it as simple as possible. Slant the shoulder line by 5 cm.

☞ Measurements: Bust 90 cm, Length 72 cm, Waist 85 cm (standard gauge for the shrinking)

Preparations

1 Prepare your working area. Cover the table with a skid-proof mat or bubble plastic foil big enough for your project. Cover the bubble foil with a paint protection plastic. This is useful when flipping the project over. Put the template down.

2 Lay the silk you want as a stand out on the template crunched up.

3 Divide the pongee silk piece in two. Lay the one half on the template and crunch the silk to create folds. Fit the template leaving 4-5 cm around the edges of the template pattern for wrapping the silk over to the back. Let the silk protrude 10 cm on the lower part.
☞ Note: To create the texture moisten the silk before crunching it up.
☞ Fold the seams around the sides and the shoulders of the template. Wet them with warm soapy water to have them stick to the template. Leave the neck, hem and armholes open. The water works like glue, sticking the fabrics to the template. This is very practical because you can do it after flipping the project over.

4 Now lay out the wool. Divide the pattern in sections: Bust and lower body.
☞ Make sure the roving is straight before starting to lay out the wool. Carefully divide the wool in half, 30 g for the front and 30 g for the back. Then divide in half again in 15 g for the first front half and 15 g for the second lower front.
☞ Then divide the wool into small parts, for example into a length of 20 cm. Splitting the wool allows you to keep control of how much wool you are pulling out and it helps to lay the wool evenly

and not too thick. Make sure you avoid putting too much wool on your piece. Too much wool will reduce the shrinkage and the top will turn out too stiff to enjoy.

The Layout

5 Lay out the wool very finely starting with the bust area. Lay a thin layer of wool along the armholes and neck line both vertically and horizontally. Use approx. 5-6 cm around the neck line. (Don't forget to check the diagram to make sure you are doing this correctly)
☞ Lay one layer of wool on the bust area, diagonally from under the arm holes meeting in the centre creating an upside-down V shape. Now lay the wool horizontally covering the rest of the silk. (Remember: Just one thin layer!)

6 Now decorate the top with the yarns and silk fibers if desired. When you are happy with the decorations wet the project completely with warm soapy water (olive soap), the cover it with the Margilan silk. Now completely cover the piece with a shade net or thin plastic foil. Press it down to secure the decorations and to get rid of all the pockets of air. If not soapy enough, rub a bar of soap over it. Check to make sure that all areas are well soaked. Then gently remove the net or the thin foil and check the garment for any misplaced decorations.

7 Now it's time to use the sander. Sand the piece for 10 seconds on each position. Do not sand the sides and the shoulder line areas as you need to fold these parts of wool and fabric later to the back.

8 After finishing examining it and cover it with a thin plastic sheet, such as paint protection plastic. Spray some soapy water over it and press out the air. Then turn the project over with the help of the plastic underneath between the project and the anti-slip mat. Remove the plastic.

The Back

9 Add the other half of the silk on top and repeat step 2.
☞ Pull out the base wool from the underside and fold it over to the side on which the silk is on.

10 Lay a thin layer of wool along the armholes vertically and horizontally as well as around the neckline about 5-6 cm. Check again the

back diagram just to make sure you are doing this correctly.

☞ Lay one layer of wool on the bust area diagonally this time from shoulder line to meet in the centre so you get a kind of V-shape.

☞ For the lower part repeat steps 6 and 7.

11 Check the side (seam) lines and flatten them by smoothing them with your hand and a little soap. Cover your hands with thin plastic foil or disposable gloves to make sure that the wool doesn't cling. If happy with all the seam lines it is time to roll.

Rolling

12 Cover your work with the thin plastic foil. Then using a pool noodle or a PVC-plastic pipe long enough for your project, roll it with the anti-slip mat gently but firmly into a roll.

13 Tie the roll on three places with a soft cord. Wrap it in a big towel or a piece of cotton, for example an old bedsheet. Note: Do not roll it too tightly, it might create wrinkles on your project. Begin rolling by applying pressure onto the work piece for 10 minutes.

14 Unwrap the project, massage away all the wrinkles, if any. Fix whatever needs fixing. Rub the seam lines and shoulder seems. At this stage, you can still repair anything and you can add elements you might have forgotten to add. Always use a sander to fix them down.

☞ Re-roll the workpiece from the opposite site and continue to roll it for another 5 minutes. Open and smooth out the shoulder and side seams. Then sprinkle hot water on the workpiece to keep it warm.
☞ Move the pool noodle to the top part of the workpiece and tightly roll it up again, repeating the previous rolling steps. This time roll for 5 minutes, both the top and the bottom. By now the project has shrunk by 25 % and has been rolled from all four sides.

☞ Remove the template. Sprinkle some hot water onto the workpiece and smooth out the wrinkles and all folds, paying attention to the side seams. Then carefully open the top and bottom of the garment, but avoid using the scissors.

Fulling

15 Start by spreading the top out and have a quick look to see which sides need to shrink more. As soon as

you know with which direction to start pour hot water on the project and roll it into the skid-proof mat, this time without the pool noodle. Roll to the count of 100, then open it up and spread it out to make sure the inside is not felting together.

☞ No alternate the sides and roll from top to bottom, adding hot water whenever necessary. Keep checking to make sure that the fabric doesn't shrink too much. Have a tape measure at hand to check the measurements of the finished top.

☞ Keep in mind that the wool will shrink in the direction you roll it. Make use of this knowledge to shape your garment. To shape the waistline, roll it in the waist together with the bust to fit. Roll the top in the direction of how the wool is laid out. Use a rigged rubber mat to speed up the process. It is important not to rub but to roll the top, rubbing causes the fibres to peel.

☞ Once happy with the shrinkage and the size you can check the measurements of the top. Now you cut can armholes 20 cm down and 15 cm for the neck line in the middle of the of the top. Felt around the holes. Then the project is rinsed and wrung out and the final fitting can be done if your model is here.

☞ Use a dress making pass form or a tailor's mannequin if you have one. The steam the garment with an iron to shape it by. Stretch and pull out the top on all areas needed, to fit it. Cut away any extra fibre around the neckline and arms. Steaming the garment gives it a professional look.

16 You can then take the measurements and calculate the shrinkage. Below are the results from this top.

17 When measuring the shrinking of the top, we measure the shrinkage in length and in width. The shrinking formula is the difference between the original and the final sample in cm divided by the original value in cm multiplied by 100. The result equals the shrinking percentage.

Original and Final Measurements of the Top

- ☞ Length: 72 cm after 62 cm: shrunk by 10 cm
- ☞ Bust: The top area from 90 cm to 45 cm: shrunk by half
- ☞ Waist: middle area from 90 cm to 42 cm: shrunk by 48 cm

☞ Lower part of the top shrunk from 90 cm to 52 cm: shrunk by 38 cm.

INSTRUCTIONS:

CHARITY VAN DER MEER-MUSOMA

PAGES 44-47

Like a Snowy Landscape

After many experiments with color and wool the Austrian Constanze Habringer-Krög has found her individual felting style: natural and simple

»My first contact with felt was 25 years ago in the shape a pair of hand-felted home slippers«, Constanze Habringer-Krög informs us. The Montessori pedagogue and mother of four grown-up children was taken by the material on the spot. »It gave me a feeling of being taken care of, of security, warmth and protection. Felt for me radiates tranquility and coziness, like snow when it covers the land«, the artist describes her perception.

☞ At the beginning, teaching herself how to felt was not easy.»After many trials and errors it dawned on me that each kind of wool had different characteristics, and not every sheep's wool is suitable for the purpose. I had a good mind to quit altogether«, she smiles. After further oeuvres, of which some landed in the mixed manure she held her first self-made pair of slippers in her hands. »The beginning was hard won expertise through experience«, Constanze Habringer-Krög recalls. But the effort was worthwhile: »All that experimentation resulted in a kind of confidence when dealing with wool is concerned. I can pass my knowledge on and I regard felt as my preferred material now«, says the artist from Innsbruck enthusiastically.

From Discovery to Expression

In the following years, Constanze Habringer-Krög took part in many workshops held in Austria, Germany, Finland and Switzerland in order to learn more about the processing of wool. She tried out different wool qualities, precious fibers and different felting techniques. »Discovering was one thing, to find your own personal way of expression quite another«, she says in retrospect, adding: »Felt is so versatile. It can

offer protection and stability due to its stiffness and rigidity, yet it can also be soft, transparent and kind of vulnerable. The technique leaves so many different possibilities open due to its simplicity.«

☞ The Austrian lady finally found – after many experiments with colors and different kinds of wool – her own simple style. »Less color, instead texture, complexity and distinct lines. I fell in love with natural dyes and began to dye fibers and silk fabrics myself. Rust coloring, rust silk screen, EcoPrint, plant dyes and singeing of the finished pieces were new variations on a natural application spectrum«, she describes the development.

Organically Grown

In 2011, Constanze Habringer-Krög ventured into self-employment. »I take my objects to shows and chosen markets and fairs, I hold felting courses and work in school projects«, she tells us. Together with her husband she lives in Zell am Moos in the Salzkammergut. In her studio with a view of the beautiful Irrsee she makes tapestries, wall hangings, art objects, cushions, vessels and blankets and seamless clothing. »It is thrilling to design the surface and at the same time to create a three-dimensional object – without any seams, as if it had organically grown. During finishing, given that the material is felted well, everything turns into a playful dialogue until the work finds its ultimate form«, the artist describes the process.

☞ For her objects she mainly uses Merino wool, in more complex projects also combined with mountain sheep and raw wool and precious fibers like silk, linen, mohair etc.

Everyday Inspirations

The artist's source of inspiration for shapes, color mixes and surface design are everyday life. »A fleeting perception manifests itself – probably a shadow, a special structure or trails – and turns into an image in my head. Later in the studio I like to sketch what I have in mind and to work on the planned color range. I felt test pieces and perfect my ideas«, the artist expounds. »But in the final work process there always should remain room for spontaneous moments – something that completes my original imagination«, she adds. A process that her students learn in her courses when she accompanies them on their way to make an individual felt object. »Sometimes I really do envy them a little when they

can take home a nearly perfect jacket or another felted item after just one workshop«, Constanze Habringer-Krög says with a twinkle in her eye, hinting at her first attempts at felt making.

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 48-49

Brief Tutorial: Cuddly Lambs

The ideas in Lydia Klös' book of miniature felt objects range from sweet spring lambs over bright forsythia blossoms to tiny ladybugs that bring good fortune. The author presents this short instruction for a little sheep on a green pasture

Material

for a small sheep approx. 3 cm

- ☞ White feltable wool, approx. 0,55 g
- ☞ Some wool odds and ends in light brown, dark grey
- ☞ Or dark brown
- ☞ Birch wood disk, approx. 10 cm
- ☞ Moss or a small amount of green wool
- ☞ All-purpose glue
- ☞ Felting equipment: Mat and felting needle

1 Lay out about 0.5 g of the white wool to a strand and knot it in the middle. The strand's ends should be wound around the knot until the sphere has reached a diameter of approx. 3.5 cm. Now felt a sphere for the sheep's body and shape it so it resembles an olive (see basic instruction). Round the edges of the »olive« slightly.

2 Knot 0.25 g wool in light brown, dark grey or dark brown into a strand and wind it into a sphere measuring approx. 2 cm. Turn the little ball into a 1.5 cm olive as well and needle it to the body as a head.

3 Wind up a small strand of wool in the color of the head and fold it in half. Felt an ear from it of about 1.5 cm length. Make a second ear and needle both at the side of the sheep's head.

4 Distribute some white wool on the upper and back side of the head between the ears and felt it on.

5 Roll four little spheres (approx. 8 mm) and needle them at the lower part of the body as legs.

6 If you wish make more tiny sheep with the same or a different head color. The glue some moss or green wool onto the birchwood disk and glue the little flock on top.

Miniature Felted Figures from Natural Materials

You will find the above and many other tutorials for cute felt figurines following the seasons of the year in the book »Filz-Minis mit Naturmaterialien« by Lydia Klös. The author has been an ardent handicraft and tinkering fan ever since she was a child. For her miniatures she uses natural materials she collects herself, e.g., pebbles, stones, shells or acorns. With a felting needle and some wool, you can lean to felt bird houses in spring, ladybugs in summer or chanterelles in the fall.

Filz-Minis mit Naturmaterialien

Mit niedlichen Filzfiguren durchs Jahr
32 pages | Topp-Verlag
ISBN-13: 9783735850270
9 € (D) | 9.30 € (A)

TUTORIAL: LYDIA KLÖS

PAGES 50-53

Felt making for Peace

More than 600 felt objects from 380 contributors from 23 countries: The felt artist Corinna Nitschmann has initiated a singular peace project

Some days after the war broke out in the Ukraine, Corinna Nitschmann, my partner Péter Póth and myself sat in a pub, completely stunned. The world was in shock and so were we. What should, what could we do? Then we had an idea: Let us do something we are good in. Let's felt together for peace and collect donations at the same time.

The Colors of Peace

What color peace might be of, I asked the readers of my blog. After a couple of days, it became clear that the colors of peace are blue and green, all other colors lost against them. This was good news for me, since I didn't feel like

felting a yellow-and blue object. Cruelty and hostility are present in so many countries on earth, even if we don't think about it every day, let alone being aware of remote fighting. Peace should be everywhere and forever, independent of the color of the flags.

International Feltmaking

So, let's unite our fibers and start felting from home in our respective countries. Textile art objects that were made in single parts by different felters are not new, but always thrilling. So, I made an international call on social media and my website to send in a blue or green pre-felt. My vision was a large, watercolor-like felt piece. Motifs were not the issue, but a homogeneous surface into which the single contributions would blend. The application fee was turned into a donation. Some months later, the money was to be sent to an organization chosen by the participants.

The Practical Side

Péter had the idea to rent a post office box in case the envelopes wouldn't fit into my letter box. This turned out to be a wise decision indeed. Already a week later the first shipments arrived, and then more and more. Small and big envelopes, boxes and parcels from all over the world. But given my inexperience with global shipments I didn't reckon with the considerable cost for customs and postal fees.

☞ I soon gave up presenting the transmittals live on the community Facebook page. But I blogged every other day photos of the newcomers, so they all could see whether their contribution reached us.

☞ It became quite obvious how different the pre-felts all were. I wondered whether I should have been more precise in the tender offer. Piece after piece with motifs, signs, words and other colors than green and blue arrived. I didn't know what to make of it, but I remained hopeful.

Sort Out, Lay Out, Felting Together

To put together all the pieces we were promised a room with two huge felting tables in the Cultural Heritage Center in Budapest. Unfortunately, the institution had to close down for month in late spring, so the collected pre-felts stayed apart until fall. many parts had to be scratched open at first because they were felted too densely. We agreed upon a concept: The single parts were to be felted together regardless of any motifs

from light to dark shades. This meant we had to sort them out according to this color gradient, then they were laid out. In a next step we turned all parts around and covered the backside with fleece wool. This happened in three stages, because there was never a felting table big enough to do it in one single step. ♪ When the actual felting began, we worked with twelve helpers at times. Some stayed all day and others came during the day or after work. After twelve hours three felted carpets lay before us, which we took home. I waited for nice weather to full them on the porch in certain parts or to stretch them so they all had the same width at their full length. Great support came from my colleague Bea Németh. We glued parallel strips on the floor to make sure the desired frame measurements were kept. The finished peace felt is 1.8 x 5.5 m and has to be tinkered with some more before it starts its journey.

Worldwide Composite Work

Over 380 people took part in the project. Many transmittals already contained objects made by a group or more than one item. All in all, there were about 600 felted pieces – unfortunately we did get around to count them properly. Pre-felts came from absolute beginners who had never felted before. Three-year-old children or feltmakers over 80 had dabbled in soapy water. 23 countries and 4 continents were duly represented. ♪ After the cost for wool, gas, custom fees etc. were covered we were able to send 5.500 € (total donations 6000 €) to the Ukraine project of the Red Cross.

A Touring Exhibition

It was decided that the three tapestries could be put on show separately or as a whole. The project, to be shown hopefully in many international places, serves as a lasting demonstration of different people and nations living together in peace. Wherever the exhibition is shown the organizers could arrange for collecting further donations for the Red Cross Ukraine project.

♪ A heartfelt Thank You and a big virtual hug for all who shared in the effort – our work of art is one of a kind worldwide!

Peace Felt

Please find photos of the contributions and a report on putting them together in the CorNit Filz Blog under blog.cornitfilz.de

Parties interested in an exhibition of the peace felt are welcome. Direct mail contact under: corinna@cornitfilz.de

CORINNA NITSCHMANN

PAGES 54-55

Joyous Felting with Mrs. Feltmiller

For some years now, Silke Müller has been teaching felting to children who need assistance to enhance their senses and faculties

»When I go around in the school building the children greet me as Mrs. Filzmüller (Feltmiller) or Mrs. Filzi. Latest then, even when the day hasn't been all that good, I start to grin«, Silke Müller chuckles.

♪ Since 2012 she has been working at a school with a focus on »cognitive development« within the frame of special needs education. There she worked with children aged six to twelve on different felting projects in the art classes. She comes from the Artfelt technique that she learned from a friend in 2006 and which she has been teaching over several years in courses and workshops. »Since our children often are also physically constrained, we had to find another technique next to the Artfelt technique, which is made with a needle«, she explains.

♪ An economic tradeswoman by profession, who has had a dealership for wool and knitting material and a knitting café for years, taught herself wet-felting and needle-felting. »This allows me to adapt the felting techniques to each child's special abilities.« It is not the finished project which is crucial to keep all senses active and to allow for development. Silke Müller is convinced that »Patience, persistence, motor activity and the social co-operation are stimulated by felting«.

A Foam Party for Everybody

Because there is a danger that the children hurt themselves or others not each class can felt with the needle. In that case, wet-felting is the preferred choice. »The children and the teaching personnel like the clean smell of soap, the different textures of dry and wet wool, the warm soapy water and using the

aerosol sprinkler. The crowning event for the kids is the »foam party: whenever a lot of foam is produced«, the tutor says with a twinkle in her eye.

♪ Of course, there is always the danger that the children take either soap or wool into their mouths or that they want to drink the water. »You really have to concentrate hard. And even if it can be stressful, this task fulfills me completely. I am always surprised by how creative these children are«, Silke Müller says enthusiastically, describing the felting results made by her small clientele. Fitting for every season, they felt for example snowmen, autumn leaves, little storm lamps with candles inside, ladybugs, flowers or other presents at occasions like Easter, Christmas or Mother's Day.

Caterpillar and Butterfly

On top of that the experienced felter offers felting projects to certain teaching subjects, for example how a caterpillar morphs into a butterfly. »In a secondary level we made a leaf, eggs, a caterpillar, a cocoon and felted butterflies. This class invited the first graders and explained this metamorphose to them«, Silke Müller recalls fondly. »A great across-the-board project!«

VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 56-58

To Broaden a Felter's Horizon

In a total of 23 episodes Margit Röhm has portrayed different sheep breeds and their wool and felting characteristics. In an interview the chair of the Filznetzwerk e.V. draws a conclusion

Do you remember the first episode?

Margit Röhm: I do remember it very well, unfortunately this was no glorious chapter. It dealt with Merino sheep and, to be honest, it was rather amateurish. Today I know a lot more about Merino sheep and Merino wool and I would deal with the fibers a lot more intensely. Then it seemed just so »ordinary« to me and hardly worth a closer look. But the opposite is true. The different Merino breeds are very interesting as far as their history goes and also the wool itself

offers a lot of room for experiments and enhancing of knowledge. Also, the felting trials were not sufficiently documented and the view on the wool was still a bit superficial.

How did you test each kind of wool in your felting experiments?

Margit Röhm: In order to judge wool one experiment isn't enough, and over time my tests got more extensive. At the beginning, I really took just a handful of wool and started testing. Later I learned that I had to check on the single fibers first, to separate them and to feel and look at them individually. Also, I had to examine the staple to make a statement concerning the wool, not only the fiber mix.

☞ Today, when I want to convey solid information about a sheep breed and their wool I take at least two fleeces, if possible, from a ram and an ewe. To make things perfect one ought to examine the first shearing, but this is hard to come by as a rule. These fleeces are analyzed as a whole regarding the different fiber quality. When there is no marked difference between the flank and back wool, I separate a piece from the flank wool and scrutinize the staple quality and fiber mix. Mixed-wool staples often need to be divided to be able to experiment with the single fiber types. But since no dealer sells separated fibers one can leave this step out entirely.

☞ From this wool I weigh two different quantities, e.g., 5 grams and 20 grams. I put them on equal surfaces and felt them until I can't shrink them anymore manually. Then this test pieces are tested for thickness, solidity, hairiness etc. and the reached shrinking factor is calculated. Often the felting qualities of wool become obvious during felting. How long it takes to felt in, does it felt easily or do I have to invest a lot of time and physical force etc. I note all this down and come to a combined final conclusion.

Where did you get wool of those many breeds for your experiments?

Margit Röhm: At the beginning this was quite easy, I simply used the wool that I had already handy for my work, that I had been collecting over the course of the years. Sheep keepers often advertise wool and you can find in certain appropriate internet group good offers from breeders and ambitious shepherds. But even this became increasingly difficult the more we discussed rarer breeds. Unfortunately, many sheep

keepers don't know whether a fleece is of good or bad quality or whether their sheep are really pure-bred. It took a lot of research and written exchange to provide the right kind of material. But I had great colleagues who not only knew much about wool in general, but had valuable contacts; only so the serial became possible at all.

Which kind of wool felts well and why?

Margit Röhm: I can only respond this with an explicit: »It just depends.« I am often asked this question, but there is no short, definite answer. Different wool serves well for certain projects and the personal likings and the desired workload come into play as well. Traders usually can easily provide Mountain Sheep and Merino wool, the latter in a variety of thinness and provenance. This is for a valid reason: these kinds are easy to process, their characteristics are reliable and don't vary too much, and last but not least they are produced in big quantities. Whoever wants to dig deeper into felt making will be able to expand her felting horizon and enhance his artistic expression once some other kinds of wool are taken into consideration.

Were there any surprises during the experimental phases?

Margit Röhm: They were numerous indeed. I was conscious about the fact that some wool felts badly or has so many kemp hairs that you want to keep your hands off. But that there is wool which doesn't seem to felt at all, like Shropshire wool, or that wool exists that makes for a sturdy, closed felt despite of long kemp – all this amounts to knowledge that has surprised me and that made me realize in the end how little I had known of wool some years ago.

What were your personal gains while working on the serial?

Margit Röhm: I realized I have still a lot to learn and that I can see the good in every kind of wool. Be it that they offer many new possibilities for my artistic expression, or for simple practical reasons, that the sheep are so beautiful or even rare. In the course of the serial work I took to enjoy dealing with the different breeds and their special features, to extend and enrich my experience and knowledge. Above all, however, I have been taught that wool and felt are my ultimate means of expression and that I can still discover

something new after 18 years of a feltmaker's experience.

Margit Röhm began the serial »Sheep & Wool« following an idea by Susanne Schächter-Heil for the Filznetzwerk in 2017. The total 23 episodes were published in the filzfun issues 58 through 77.

INTERVIEW VALESKA GEHRKE

PAGES 59-61

All Aboard

Joining Flóra Carlile-Kovács, a native Hungarian who is proud of her heritage, on a tour of Western Hungary is nonpareil in travel. A report by Anne Price

Upon my arrival Flóra guided me to the driver who whisked me away to my hotel. I had time to enjoy shopping in Market Hall and take a boat ride on the Danube at sunset.

☞ In the morning our international group of felters boarded our coach for what was the beginning of a great adventure! First stop the quaint village of Zebegény for a studio visit with a vibrant tapestry artist, Rózsa Raab. Rózsa's tapestry is crafted into jewelry, purses and bags that are stunning!

☞ After a thrilling barge ride, maneuvered by a tug boat, we crossed the Duna River to Dunaalmás and were hosted in the hillside home and studio of Judit Venczelné Danyi, an extremely talented felt artist, and her spouse, Ferenc Venczel. Ferenc turns both native and exotic wood to create the most beautiful and functional felting tools I have ever seen or used.

From the Fleamarket to the Thermal Spa

Next, we traveled to Csopak with a visit to the village home of István Kardos for a grand showing, and fascinating history, of his extensive oriental rug collection. Awesome!

☞ And then we were off to Káptalantóti. In no time we were pulling into a field at the bustling Liliomkert Farmer's and Antique Market. A flea marketer's dream! Off to the old resort town of Héviz, on the shore of Europe's largest thermal lake. There was time to relax in the soothing hot waters and rest my weary feet.

At day's end we entered the gates of the Creative House. Originally a manor house in the Middle Ages, rebuilt in 1867 by the Bezeredj family, their mansion was open to many artists. Today it survives as an artist's residence owned by Vas County. It is our home for the next 4 days.

Bags and Hats in the Creative House

Here we immersed ourselves in a two-day felted bag workshop with world renowned felt artist, instructor and author Judit Tóth-Pócs. Intense, but so rewarding. ☞ Then we were greeted by vivacious felt artist Kinga Huszti. And we were introduced to a fun and enlightening double-walled and sculpted hat workshop. We were delighted in wearing our hats for the rest of the Tour! After days of exploring, visiting and gleaning knowledge from world renowned felters, I could not imagine the treat Flóra had waiting for us!

The Felt Making Factory

In Kőszeg we visited a 126-year old felt making factory. And not just visit, but we were provided with 1 m length of wool batts to design a felted piece. We followed our pieces as they moved through the processing on the original machinery. What a treasure to be handed our own creation at the end! Flóra's ingenuity in teaming up with Ilona Fodor, the owner of the Multifelt Factory, was truly an unexpected treat.

☞ On our way to Győr we stopped in Pápa to learn the history of the indigo print trade at the Hungarian Indigo-Print Museum - hosted in its original, 206-year-old building.

☞ In Győr Vanda Robert, who mastered the nomad technique of using exact stitches to achieve relief-like surfaces on felted items, spent 2 days patiently coaching us to achieve fascinating designs!

Private Finale

On our way back to Budapest we made a brief stop at the studio of Anikó Boros who makes exquisite fine felt jewelry.

☞ As our Tour comes to an end in Budapest, Flóra has arranged for us to meet with several Hungarian artists and view their works of art at a private trunk show - Shopping optional. This last day includes exploring small streets and galleries in the Millennium District, a thermal bath and a Farewell Dinner in a local restaurant. Safe travels to new felted friends. Flóra's 2023 East Hungary Felt Tour is on the horizon. Count Me In!

Flóra Carlile-Kovács

Flóra has been leading felting international tours to Hungary since 2016. The felting workshops are balanced with cultural immersion, craft shows, thermal baths, local food, and a very personal experience of the country. More info: <https://www.felttours.com>

ANNE PRICE

PAGES 62-63

Felt Blankets From Koprivschitz

In the fall of 2022, Mari Nagy und István Vidák visited the Bulgarian town Koprivschitz again to see rare and splendid ancient felted blankets. This short article is the sequel to an article from the filzfun 3/2020

It is pure magic to take place in a room surrounded by 200 year-old felt blankets. Archeologists know that feeling when they excavate remains of buildings, fences, gates and items belonging to the people who used them in their daily life. Here, in the midst of the forested mountains of Sredna Gora houses, fences and gates don't have to be unearthed with a shovel but simply dusted. The atmosphere in the small town Koprivschitz brings visitors back to the early 20th century. The town's name probably stems from the word Wort »Kopriva«, which translates »stingy nettle«. On the other hand, its provenance could be »kup-recsitsi«, which means »flood«. The latter is much more probable, since here many brooks flow into the Topolnitsa river. In the days of old, people were laid to rest at the graveyard on the slope, but their world can still be glimpsed in the houses that are furnished in a very traditional way. Six of them are kind of open-air museums where the public is welcome. The so-called Lyutov house is especially interesting.

The Lyutov Museum

Our visits to Bulgaria's small treasure chest, i.e. Koprivschitz began in the early 1980ies. Then we already knew that 40 blankets are stored in the museum.

☞ One fine day the fate of the collection took a different turn. Maria Budurova, an artist from Koprivschitz, who used

to work with industrial methods was introduced to felt artisanry. She donated her textiles to the museum under the condition that they become permanent show pieces in the Lyutov museum. The tapestry (see photo) is one of her works. In the rooms downstairs, luckily, we were able to admire her art as well as the original blankets.

☞ In the last couple of years, the exhibition was newly curated. Now visitors can look at ten ancient felt blankets in three rooms. In one room you are shown local weaving traditions, yet another, as already mentioned, is dedicated to Maria Budurova.

Splendid Blankets

As per the current exhibition methods, the beautiful and valuable items should be mounted directly in front of the spectator's eyes, on par with them, so to speak. Here, the felt blankets were shown on a metal rack.

☞ Mrs. Anastasia Rajgin's gorgeous blanket (see photo) is 1.90 m wide and 2.80 m long. This means that the original measurements were much larger before the blanket was felted, i.e., 2.50 m to 3.60 m. The basic material were nine kilograms of natural-colored sheep wool. The local name is »volna«. The felt is very dense, the edges are even. Finer sheep wool was added to the top and the bottom of the blanket. To save money, brown wool has been put into the middle layer, as was the custom in the local workshops them. Thanks to careful conservation practice there is no sign of wear and tear on the blanket, and there is no damage done by moths.

A Rich Customer

The most common pattern colors are dark blue and pepper red. Both colors are used for bordering and filling out. We have never seen bigger red and blue colored parts on any other blanket. This is a sign that the client and owner belonged to a wealthy family. Red and blue form two thirds of the pattern surface, the remaining third is mostly brown and yellow.

☞ An inscription on the long side suggests that the blanket was made for Anastasia H. Rajgin. Next to it is the date it was finished: 1873. Mrs. Krivralcheva bought the blanket in the 1950ies from Mrs. Ljuba Nikolova Sutulova.

☞ The oldest of the Bulgarian felt blankets is from 1750. This kind of blankets may have existed even earlier but we have no information about that.

The last blankets of the collection are from 1867 and 1883. This is the time of the Bulgarian Independence War, when 500 years of Turkish reign ended. There were no chemical dyes in those days, so all patterns are plant-dyed.

Well-Established Patterns

In the middle of the blanket shown we see a complex, multi-colored sun pattern, a popular one in the local tradition. At the edges, flowers break out of their seeds and turn towards the rays of the sun. The shape looking like a small triangle could be a tent, as some experts think.

☞ Of course, the photos of these beautiful blankets and their details are expressive, but they cannot substitute actually being present and seeing them. This is important for feltmakers and for those artists who dye with plant material. Kopriwtschiza und Bulgaria are in Europe, a little more than a stone's throw away. Whoever wants to come with us is welcome!

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

PAGES 64-65

Old For New

Henriette Giese from Denmark has written a book (»Old Clothes in Disguise – Nuno-felt – shape – design) on how you can turn old clothes into exciting new ones by means of Nuno felt. After courses with Anne Bak Markers she came up with the idea to use the Nuno felting technique for that purpose. For instance, a jacket from the discarded belly dance trousers of her daughter-in-law or a blouse from two old wrap-around skirts. Interested parties will find pertaining information for the techniques, designs

and assistance how garments are shaped into a new look. Her book is a call to get old, unused clothing out of the closet and to recycle it. Good for the environment, easy on your purse and a lot of creative fun.

Unique Knot-Art Objects

Do you want to try something entirely different in your creative quest? Then maybe Macramé is the right thing for you. The book »1x1 kreativ Makramee« by the bestselling author Josephine Kirsch shows all basics of this hip knotting technique. In small, descriptive teaching sections you will find knowledgeable information about which materials to choose, how to manage the basic knots as well as complex pattern tutorials. The well-known blogger freely shares tricks of the trade and offers a lot of inspiring material to make beautiful tapestries, hanging baskets or Boho storm lamps.

Sewing Retro Style

Back to the 80ies – the fashion of this decade is trendy again. The Hamburg-based designer Mieke Fraatz introduces cool sewing patterns in the 80ies retro style in her book »Nähen mit Mieke Fraatz – Back to the 80s«. The author shows how to turn second-hand clothes into stylish fashion. Thanks to a detailed basic information part about sewing even beginners should be able to use the instructions. The book contains six pattern sheets for extravagant clothing in sizes 32-44.

☞ Mieke Fraatz has learned her passion for sewing her childhood from her

grandfather, whose mother had been a tailor. She continues to please her followers on Instagram and Tiktok with ever new sewing projects and DIY ideas.

Creative Ideas in Scandinavian Design

A living room in Scandi Look – the 60 ideas introduced promise a wonderful effect and are easy to make. The projects range from patterned cups over practical organizing assistance to presents. They are made from diverse materials like wool, dried flowers, wood or paper. The book »Skandi-Chic – Das große Kreativbuch im Nature Look« contains intricate upcycling ideas for your own home. With the help of the author Angelika Putz you can design and tinker with special decorations without much work and simple means. Creative people will find thrilling projects for each season. On her Instagram blog »aufgeputzt« the artist from Upper Austria inspires her community with original DIY ideas which are easy to make and give a lot of fun.

Cheeky Mini Creatures from the Ocean

In her book »Edwards Mini-Tierparade. Ozean« Kerry Lord brings cute sea animals to life. A school of small clownfish, a droll crab or a lovely seahorse – thanks to 25 simple step-by-step crocheting instructions and clear technique illustrations the perky ocean dwellers are quickly made. Beginners and professionals will get their money's worth looking for their favorite maritime animal.

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