

filzfun – The English Supplement

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Dear Readers,

have you ever had a closer look at the English word «felting» which describes the felting process? It is hardly a coincidence that it goes hand in hand with the past tense of the verb to «feel» and brings to mind the touch of a hand? Etymologically, «felting» comes from felt, a piece of cloth or the finished product, but it is closely associated with feeling. And felt is known to deeply touch people. We get closer to different felt artists and we devote this issue to the many ways to felt. A fine example is the report concerning the artist Susanne Weber who employs unique mix techniques, so that her felted paintings look like watercolors (as of page 40) Lisette Smulders de Groot from The Netherlands believes in bright colors, roses and dots. You can find her felted fireworks as of page 48. Felt artists Christian König's signature pieces are funny figurines with original names (as of page 28). How Natasha Smart from Great Britain creates her three-dimensional, sculptural felt objects you can read as of page 32. Just on time for Christmas preparations she offers our readers

instructions for a felted clutch bag (page 36 ff) Another tutorial, this time by Natalie Martin, shows how you can make cozy felted socks for the winter. Gerti Gruisinga tells us about her extravagant felted shoes (as of page 52). On Page 54, Margit Röhm takes us along for a holiday in Iceland, where she met her favorite animals, the sheep, at every corner and feltmaking was never far away. Also, Lisa Klakulak from the US went on a trip, this time to Ireland. The geological structures she found there are remindful of her own art (page 22). Conny Philipp is also smitten with sheep and tells us about her little flock (as of page 58) This issue includes, as usual, reports on interesting exhibitions, for example one of Bulgarian Felt Carpets (page 12) or one of Yvonne Zoberbier's felted sculptures (as of page 16). We wish you a lot of fun while reading and enjoying, and of course inspiration!

Best regards
Your filzfun team

NOTE

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

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de
The spring issue will be published on March 1st, 2025
Editorial deadline: December 2nd, 2024

Creatives' Spring Fair

From March 7th through 9th 2025, the CREATIVMESSE where DIY-fans and other creatives meet is going to take place at the Messe Augsburg. Amateur designers, fashion fans and handicraft people cannot only weave intricate loops but make for contact with the like-minded. You can peep over the shoulders of experts and professionals, try out new or traditional techniques, perfect your skills in workshops and discover the joys of DYS during the many events. Shopping queens and kings may delve into beads and pearls, bathe in beautiful fabrics, get smitten by tons of decorative articles and learn how to upgrade and upcycle items. Even young creatives will get their money's worth, e.g. by taking part in courses for pottery, finger knitting, Origami, making glass mosaics or jewelry, linocuts, modelling, painting, stamping, die cutting or scrapbooking.

creativmesse.de

Felters' Meeting 2025 «Hohenflüge (Flying High)»

Next year, the annual felters' meeting will take place at the Bildungszentrum Kloster Roggenburg from February 13th to 16th 2025. Some of the scheduled events will be held in the nearby city of Ulm. The participants are invited for a city tour around the highest church tower in the world. They will learn about the history of Mr. Berblinger, the famous tailor of Ulm and they will transform this story into a felted object. We also try to get felt to fly and we plan on introducing architectural objects made of felt. The Ulm Sparrow and the Cathedral Bat will be called back to life. A jubilee occasion is the Filznetzwerk's 20th anniversary in 2025. In a festive act, the Filznetzwerk's actions over time and the 25 years of Felters' Meetings will be celebrated. Please apply by attached form at filznetzwerk.de.

Podcast Tipp: «Volle Brause (Full Fizz)»

Two felters had the spontaneous idea to make a podcast about feltmaking in the summer of this year. Under the title «Volle Brause» (roughly translating as Full Fizz) the two felt artists Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke and Ina Birke started their FILZ-PODCAST on September 1st 2024. It deals with all kinds of questions concerning the subject and, in each episode, the two lead their audience through different themes. Solvig provides the questions and Ina has the answers. Not only come up technical aspects but also current projects and other information pertaining to this interesting craft. They offer practical advice and report on current trends and developments in the felters' scene. You will also get a glimpse into shows and exhibitions and learn about the artists. All questions will be answered per mail under hallo@filz-podcast.de filz-podcast.de

«Break the limits» with Bodo Korsig

Bodo Korsig's exhibit with its enigmatic title «Break the limits» will be on show in the Museum Art.Plus in Donaueschingen until March 9th 2025. The German felt artist presents, among other works, his big size felt and other art objects made from felt, wood and paper-cutouts. In his oeuvre, he addresses all kinds of existential conditions like fear, violence and death by transforming them into poetic, provocative, mysterious or buzzwordy expressions. Impressive areas of conflict between felt's vulnerable beauty and the urgent issues of our times develop, inviting the spectator to seek deeper connections to her or his own reality.

korsig.com

Felting Bounty in the Museum de Kantfabriek

The exhibit called «Vilt Veelzijdig» opened in the Museum de Kantfabriek in Horst/The Netherlands on September 29th 2024. It is on show together with the exhibit «Corals» that was initiated by the Dutch Felters Association as a communal effort of more than 300 feltmakers. The small museum part of a former lace factory that was in operation until 2006. It vividly presents not only the machines but also the people who worked there in corresponding scenes. The museum concept comprises the history of textile crafts in the Horst region. They have alternating exhibits and offer courses for textile enthusiasts. Also, the unique works of the Filznetzwerk's 39 artists, combined in a show titled «Filz gestaltet Raum (Felt Creates Space)» can be seen on site with its astounding array of themes, techniques and interpretations, all crowned by the equally mind-boggling versatility of felt. The show will be open until December 29th 2024. museumdekantfabriek.nl

Variety Throughout Thick and Thin

«Thick & Thin» was the title of the international felting exhibition of the Finnish Felt Association FILTTI, which took place in the Gallery Kivipankki in the Finnish city of Jämsä from July 2nd until August 4th 2024

For the 26th time, the international felting exhibition took place, as every year, in the Finnish city Jämsä, at the same venue with ever-changing themes and new international felt art. This year's project called «Thick & Thin» showed a variety of different kinds of felt and how different thicknesses in felt look and feel. The rather denser or thicker felts turned into wall hangings or sculptures, the thinner ones for fluffy scarves, interior decoration or smaller items of daily use. As international guests for this year's event, FILTI had invited the feltmaking experts from the Oberrot Felting School of the German company Wollknoll GmbH. Their invitation was very well received.

Seven Squares, Seven Teachers, One Team

The German feltmaking instructors came with a charming idea. The colors of the seven felt squares shown at the international exhibit, chosen by the German feltmakers, were blue and white; the colors of the Finnish flag, much to the joy of the hosts. A true compliment! The representative work of art is a team felt made of seven different parts. Each of the seven squares suggests a creative interpretation of this handicraft, obvious in the individual perspectives and the differing artistic approach shown by the Oberrot instructors. The squares depict symbolically the many techniques that the teachers bring across to their students during the training. The two upper squares were made by Minka de Weerd and Heidi Greb. The three squares in the middle were felted by Beate Bossert and Claudia Cappello. The ones below are the work of Kerstin Scherr, Ursula Eichenberger and Lyda Rump. These works of art were placed along the wall of the lobby to honor the international guests. All in all, 22 art objects made by the Oberrot Felting School's instructors were on show plus 20 showpieces made by the FILTI members. Four of those were made by their foreign members, Susanne Breuling and Silke Koch from Germany, Reena Curphey from Estonia and the Austrian felter Susanne Weber.

SIRPA MÄNTYLÄ

Further Information

FILTI is a network of 96 feltmakers, among them 14 from other countries. They contrive to bring together feltmakers, felt artists, artisans, teachers, lecturers and wool producing companies. The association promotes co-operation among members, offering advice concerning professional issues, supports exhibiting endeavors, organizes felting courses and workshops and informs its members about national and international events, shows and competitions. The association is in collaboration with different lobbying groups and in close contact with several felting associations from abroad, as for instance with the German Filznetzwerk. More about the Finnish Felt Association FILTTI: filtti.fi

PAGES 12-15

Great Sun Myths in Felt

The historical building of the Ethnographic Museum Plovdiv supplies the breathtaking scenery behind the show «Bulgarian Felt Carpets – A Message from the Past». The Bulgarian felt artist Svetlana Kamps reports on the event

The forty big-sized, very artfully made felt carpets – some of them well over 200 years old – were loan collections from six Bulgarian museums and depots. This is the very first time in ages that these unique items are made available to the public. They are the most ancient felt carpets found in Europe with a truly exciting sun symbolism and narrative power. They also go by the name «Great Sun myths in felt». These historical, richly ornamented carpets that originally came from Koprivshtiza, Vidin or the Rila cloister were made to order as wedding carpets from the 17th until the 20th century in Bulgaria. Before a girl got married, her family invited the feltmakers to their home or farm. The patterns were chosen and laid out and each carpet was individually provided with colorful, vivid symbols for happiness, fecundity, health, blessing and protection. In Cyrillic script, the name of the bride and the year the carpet was made was felted in with woolen threads. Together with the bride, the felt carpets came into the bridegroom's house and were used for the bedding of the young family. Over the years, they turned into «guest beds» or were used as thick, beautiful and insulating walls inside the house. The bride's family gave her positive energy and best wishes for her future household and her own family. Later, when she was expecting, the cradle was hung up directly over the central sun symbol depicted on the carpet, so that the little boy or girl may prosper from this true source of life, sleeping and feeding and growing up under its protective rays.

Floral Motifs and Natural Symbols

In the center of a Bulgarian felt carpet there is always the sun. Many floral motifs like flowers, vines, cypress trees, trees of life, rose hips and cherries stretch out their little branches and leaves from the center into every corner. The carpets are laid out mirror-invertedly, i.e. at first the contours of the patterns

which are then filled up, afterwards the background color and on top the remaining layers of monochrome wool. In the beginning, the feltmakers twist cords and lay out the patterns. Straight lines mark the limits of the outer world and the small world within – the family. Further added are beloved symbols like the river of life, rams' horns, bird traces, solar signs and sun rays, the ways we walk during our earthly existence. Always forward and yet in a circle between life and death.

Varied Participation Program

In the picturesque yard of the Ethnographic Museum Plovdiv surrounded by lush boxwood trees, a colorful artisan' market accompanied the show. All interested parties could take part in pottery, carving and the forging of jewels and iron, weaving, embroidering, candle making and a lot more. Feltmaking was chosen as the main craft. Each day there were demonstrations and performances, eagerly taken up by TV stations and the public in general. At the opening, the museum's board of directors thanked the Hungarian felt pioneer and artist Istvan Vidak for having given the impulse for such a venture. As a Bulgarian felt artist, I took part in the exhibit as well. Together with István Vidak we laid out a sun carpet in front of an audience. We explained the symbolism involved, we talked about the carpets' history and discussed the choice of different kinds of wools when finishing the carpet. Several members of the audience took part in laying out the colors and enjoyed their deft finger work.

Yurts Tell Stories

As my graduation piece in the Oberrot Felting School I made a yurt. It tells the story of the Bulgarian people who once were nomads and the yurt was their home. It could be dismantled and set up at another place, as nomads do. The floor is made from a carpet with dense curls, in the veggie felt technique. The Cyrillic letters Ж and Ъ stand for life (живот) and energetic protection. My graduation work got me back on my home journey, back to nostalgic me.

~ I greatly enjoyed working with Istvan Vidak during this exhibition and the fact that so many feltmakers have been visiting the event in Plovdiv. The beauty that makes felt is everlasting.

SVETLANA KAMPS

Further Information

Svetlana Kamps is a translator and felt artist. She hosts felting workshops for children (e.g. for anniversaries or wool courses in elementary school) and adults. She is very close to her Bulgarian culture and traditions and she reports on her journeys in her blogs – trips to see goats and sheep, flower celebrations, the houses of Astrid Lindgren's literary creations in Sweden, bio-plants on Gomera with mangoes and avocados and, naturally, to the mountain villages of Bulgaria.

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Facebook: [@Svetlana Kamps](https://www.facebook.com/SvetlanaKamps)

PAGES 16-17

Marble Busts Differently This Time

From September 13th to 29th 2024, the exhibit «A N D E R S (Different)» presents felted sculptures made by Yvonne Zoberbier in the Kunstquartier of the Alte Handelsschule Leipzig. On show were filigree female torsi and impressive female head sculptures

Dr. phil. Barbara Röhner held the honorific speech at the festive opening on September 13th 2024. Musical accompaniment were Renaissance lute melodies played by the Brazilian musician Mozart Dionisio Lisboa from the University for Music and Theatre in Leipzig – a wonderful introduction to Yvonne Zoberbier's oeuvre for the many visitors. Her sculptures embody indeed ideals from the ancient world which she transposes into contemporary art. The balanced proportions and resting heads of her figurines which seem to be carved from marble when seen from a distance are remindful of a rebirth of antiquity. But on closer inspection, you see the innumerable fine hairs of the material felt. The facial expressions, however, are not classical, but rather connect with those of indigenous peoples. The female torsi bear hardly a resemblance to antique postures but seem to rise from their posts airily.

Sculptures and Photography

Stillness and movement are the two poles in between which Yvonne Zoberbier's

sculptures can be contextualized. If you engage in closer inspection, the stillness wins. Further characteristics are opposites like delicacy and resilience, enhanced by the latest big-size photographs that shed an unusual light on the sculptures. It is hard to believe that one single felted head can take on so many different apparitions in ice or water, and that it remains fully intact after all such treatment. Yvonne Zoberbier's penchant for snow and ice crystals is obvious, leading to ongoing experiments.

Changing Perspectives

Even if the photographs depict the felted sculptures' many forms of appearance, each single work possesses a singularly different perspective depending on the variations of light incidence. At one moment, a face may seem determined and firm, at yet another vulnerable and brittle. While the sculptures are made (which may take several years) the features change with every stitch of the needle. Without previous sketching and without any supporting or filling materials, the artist makes her sculptures with ecologically certified merino wool in the needle felt technique. The soft texture is made so dense that not even water and ice can destroy it. Last but not least, through the spectator's own experiences and state of mind Zoberbier's sculptures are subject to constant changes of perspective, which may well lead to a second visit of this remarkable exhibition.

DR. BARBARA RÖHNER

Yvonne Zoberbier

impresses through her attentive gaze for the smallest details of the natural world. Felted gestures, facial expressions and faces in general come to life from remembrance, emotions, experiences and impressions coupled with a deeply feminine view on the human body. Her work is shown in many international exhibits.

Web page: yvonne-zoberbier-filzplastiken.de
Instagram: [@yvonnezoberbier](https://www.instagram.com/yvonnezoberbier)

PAGES 18-19

A Golden Felt Age in Hohebuch

The Heimvolkshochschule (Adult Education Center) has been known for ages to offer a broad range of felting courses. The education advisor Annette Laucher tells us of the past and directs toward the future

The «era of feltmaking» in Hohebuch began with Hildegard Hage, who used to be an education advisor as well, in the year 1980. Hage worked in the institution from 1980 to 2002 and established creative courses in this former exclusively agricultural center. For ten years, she organized and held felt art weeks with feltmakers from all over the world. Hildegard Hage acquired her skill in traditional felting techniques directly in the countries of origin, which made it possible to invite teachers from many different countries to Hohebuch, among them Mari Nagy, István Vidák, Katharina Thomas, Inge Evers, Inge Bauer, Claudia Gemein and many others. As of 2002, Beate Hufeisen was «the woman for feltmaking» in Hohebuch. Thanks to her, the felters' meetings of the Filznetzwerk were held in Hohebuch in the years 2006, 2014 and 2017. She as well was an expert in passing on enthusiasm and expertise for this craft and in keeping the Education Center Hohebuch alive as a lively source of felting ideas and projects.

Golden Felt

Recently, even gold was felted in Hohebuch, and felt gilded. In June of this year 16 felters met to learn about the Ottoman felting technique with the US felt artist Renate Maile-Moskowitz. In this technique, intricate nuno variants are laid out like mosaics. A year in advance already this course was fully booked, and the waiting list was still long. Renate Maile-Moskowitz further offered a weekend course and two daily courses in Hohebuch. At the week end, «Hodge Podge» was on schedule. One could choose between moccasins, a bag with exchangeable flap and accessories like folds, godets and bag inserts and fixtures. Monday was gold's big day, and on Tuesday the participants dealt with «The Bucket List» – containers for all kinds of things. The subjects gold and felt proved so contagious that for 2025 a whole weekend will be devoted to it.

Outlook for 2025

After many years, Anja Fröhlich (formerly Atzert) will return to Hohebuch. She will felt «soul jewelry» – wearable art objects, each with their own stories and meaning. Some parts are forged from copper. Bärbel Stöppler had her first weekend course with us, she will teach how to felt cushions in the French vintage mattress style. The next premiere is a miniature workshop with Susanne Schillinger. Her miniatures are James and Amanda, a pair of rabbits, together with a suitable home and surroundings. Daniela Dölger highlights her program with the making of jacks-in-the box. Felt objects resembling spider webs are at the core of Johanna Lay's art and Gabriele Ihmels invites you to create your very own jewel collection. Heeding many requests, Kerstin Scherr comes to Hohebuch to host a four-day course for making felted garments - without any time pressure, from idea to finishing. Annemie Koenen shares her skills in embroidering felt. Dagmar Binder shows how to make special works of felt art and Stefanie Hofmann will teach how to felt a diagonally braided small bag.

ANNETTE LAUCHER

Further Information

Have we succeeded in kindling your interest for exciting felt objects? Please find further information about the Hohebuch felting program 2024/25 under hohebuch.de/bildungsangebote/filzen/

PAGE 20

Buntings for the Felt Art Hiking Path

June brought the regional meeting Süd-Hessen of the Filznetzwerk Association in the Gorbheimer Valley in the Oden Forest. Five feltmakers met to felt buntings for the felt art hiking path which was opened in Kainbach near Graz in Austria in the fall

The Filz-Netzwerk's regional meetings take in Germany place during the year; everything is organized by volunteers and Filznetzwerk's members. Since the spring, the Austrian felt friends have been asking for help to implement the hiking

path with different art objects and felted buntings from all over the world to serve as sign posts. For Tanja Kahl, a felt artist who lives in the Gorbheim Valley in the Oden Forest, this was the reason to call a meeting of the SüdHessen franchise. Kahl is also the cashier of the Netzwerk's board of director. Interested felters were invited into her studio in the Gorbheim Valley to felt buntings for the Austrian Felt Art Hiking Path.

☞ Four felters from surrounding cities answered the call plus one participant of an already finished course. Two more felters applied but excused themselves on short notice for health reasons. Eleven wimples were made in the wet-felting technique and were duly sent, together with two other items, to Austria. The first buntings were made according to each felter's desire and plan. In the second round, the felters agreed on a common theme. Letters were cut out from green pre-felt that added up to spell F R I E D EN (Peace). That set the tone for more buntings. In their Austrian destiny, they are hung up next to each other to defy wind and weather. In a sense they truly are sign-posts for peace.

☞ Of course, there was a lot of joy involved in networking – we told each other stories, we felted together and laughed a lot. Each artist had something to be proud of at the end of the day, greetings to Austria always in mind. Greetings also to our beloved artisan craft felt and the Filznetzwerk.

STEPH SELKE

Further Information

In September, the International Felt Art Hiking Path opened with the subject «Filzen beWEGt» in Kainbach near Graz. It is supposed to be open for several years to come.

Learn more at: filzkunst-wanderweg.at

Steph Selke: diefilzerei-naturpur.com

Tanja Kahl: filzkunst-tanja-kahl.de/

PAGE 21

Felting Curls

Four felt enthusiasts met for an entertaining weekend in Hessen and made curly felt carpets. The felt designer Renate Gerlach-Haber gives a glimpse into the felting party

We are four women who love felting – Elisabeth, Christine, Stefanie and Renate and we like to meet to felt together. Elisabeth, Christine and I have already graduated from the felt education at Wollknoll (i.e. the Oberrot Felting School). Stefanie will graduate next year. This year, we met at my home, since I have many fleeces from Wallis Blacknose and Merino Sheep from local pastime shepherds. The local sheep breeders know that I work with wool and they like to bring it to me, otherwise it would be thrown away. I cannot deal with those masses alone, so I invited my felting friends to felt in wool curls.

☞ The felting weekend started already on Tuesday with Elisabeth, visiting me from Switzerland. On Friday, Christine joined us from Mühlacker and on Saturday Stefanie from Frankfurt. All spent the night at my place until Sunday and we felted, tried out, laughed, shot the breeze and talked shop – in beautiful weather and far into the night, this weekend was a wooly success!

Mountain Sheep Wool as a Basis

The first step to felt a fur is choosing the curls. If you are lucky, there are already pieces that hang together and can be felted in as a whole. In a flower pot trivet lay out a well-felting kind of wool, at best Mountain Sheep wool, at two fingers' thickness. Onto this wool basis, the curls are positioned very close to each other or you put on such a combined fleece as mentioned before. Putting on the locks may take a while. If all curls are in the desired position, drizzle liquid soap onto the wool and pour a lot of hot water over the workpiece. Now shake the trivet in cautious movements for 15 minutes. Already after a few minutes you can see the wool and the locks meshing. In the next step, take care that the tips of the curls stay free. After having shaken the workpiece for 15 minutes shake the water out and start fulling the fur, always taking care that the tips don't felt in. In the end, the fur is rinsed, shortly put in a bath of vinegar water and then tumbled in the washing machine. The felted is fur is now ready!

RENATE GERLACH-HABER

Further Information

In 2022 Renate Gerlach-Haber graduated from the Oberrot Felting School, which was set up by the Wollknoll company. Since then, she has been working in Gnadenthal, teaching environmental issues to children on class outings and she felts with them. She also offers courses for adults and sells her products from her home.

Instagram: [@FreudichaufALLES](#)

PAGES 22-25

A Source of Creative Inspiration

During a trip to Ireland, the US felt artist Lisa Klakulak from North Carolina discovered geological structures that reminded her of her own art objects. These travel impressions keep inspiring her creative work

In true STRONGFELT form, I began a recent travel to Ireland with the extreme contrast of flying on a plane and then walk amid the Neolithic Passage Tombs of Knowth in the Brú na Bóinne Complex just north of Dublin on the same day. The dramatic land texture with its impressive Megalith land textures made of rocks, earth and corbelled roofs was that much more otherworldly with jet lag! Walking between these memorializing forms brought to mind a recently completed neck piece. For this object I had repurposed worn beach glass entrapped under a sheer layer of silk. I had free-motion machine-stitched the fabric before it was laid in the strata for wet felting. The malleability of lines sewn on before felting, whether on fabric or partially felted wool, creates a less contrived that stitching on finished or fulled felt (as seen imposed atop the felted edges). These contrasting qualities of stitch had enamored, but I wasn't as delighted with the rest of the original piece I had made back in 2015, so I cut this part away and kept it for later reclamation.

Pathways und Chambers

I delighted in learning at the Knowth visitors center that numerous megaliths were believed to have been repurposed from prior builds. In order to include the idea of repurposing in my work, I

had resolved to curl and bind the cut cords into spirals. In addition to the proliferation of this Neolithic art symbol, I also noted that the surface pecking on the kerbstones at Knowth offer a similar unpretentious gesture to this type of relaxed stitch. Upon my return to South Carolina, I named this piece «Pathways and Chambers».

~ On my further travel and my clockwise circumambulation of the northern half of this island, I checked the geological wonder of the Giants Causeway and the Causeway Coast at the base of the Antrim Plateau off my bucket list. This is another UNESCO World Heritage Site, an amazing example of convex polygon chain patterning resulting from the quicker cooling surface of a magmatic flow. Depending on the consistency of the mass, cooling starts at evenly spaced centers and the corresponding shrinkage creates most typically hexagon fracturing that continues down into the interior mass forming columns. Here also I found many similarities to a feltmaking process.

Porous Collar

The object «Porous Collar» was completed just before my travels, though it has been undergoing quite a number of transformations since 2011, which represented a lot of gained knowledge. Working on the collar started with Finn/Rambouillet wool loosely wrapped around a core tube of intertwining brass wires on which I needled partially felted circles cut out from myrobalan-dyed merino wool. As I wet felted the skin, I cut holes in the circles to reveal the wire, but also to release tension from these centers allowing the remaining wool to shrink more. It became apparent that there wasn't enough compression of the space between the internal wires to allow the wool to become an acceptable quality of felt., so I set it aside. Years later, in 2015, I cut the felt off the wires, continued to shrink the 2D plane into the densely, fulled felt you see and applied free motion stitching. This flattened collar, however, never laid quite right, so last year I re-closed the top bands of the collar into tubes, but still, the piece left a lot to be desired. This spring, I chose two vesicular rocks from my collection and encased them with a partial felt layered and stitched bezel and added a clasping cord to each. These counter weights now extend below the tubular cord on either side of the neckpiece and can be inserted into any combination of the holes allowing for literal tectonic shifts

in design. Consistency of mass, layering, forces of water, of heat, of movement and pressure and of course, time, provide ample metaphoric play between geology and felting.

LISA KLAKULAK

Further Information

Lisa Klakulak is an artist and educator living in Asheville, North Carolina, USA, whose work has been recognized by numerous awards, publications and worldwide teaching. STRONGFELT's Online & Onpoint Coursework covers a vast array of wet felting techniques in a small-scale jewelry format with the opportunity for participants to design projects inspired by their own interests. The next course begins January 12th, 2025.

More info at: [strongfelt.com](#)

PAGES 28-31

Life is Colorful

Funny felted figurines with matching names are the hallmark of Christian König. The felt artist from Radwege near Potsdam has developed a unique style for his fairytale creatures which get you into a good mood and make for many laughs

53-year-old Christian König, born in Berlin, can look back on two different careers. He is an optician by trade. Always curious and trying to expand his horizon by advanced training courses he became the director of an optician store by the age of 23. This highly visual trade also came in handy for his felt art, and his craftsmanship was greatly enhanced by this precision work. His dream – to make the store his own – didn't work out because of health problems that caused him to leave his vocation altogether. But he didn't give in. «Art is building a bridge from the stones that lay in our way – this motto helped me to find a new direction in life», he says. So, he found his lucky turn elsewhere. Even as a little boy he had loved crocheting, weaving and carpet weaving. During a physical rehab he discovered his fascination for feltmaking. On May 17th 2014 he opened his artist's studio under the name «Königs Filzerei (King's Feltmaking)» and celebrates its tenth anniversary this year. For him, a

dream had come true – a life as an artist, self-reliant, relaxed and colorful. Another motto of his is: «Life is Colorful.»

Puns and Felted Figurines

For Christian König, felting is like a meditation. «It slows me down and at the same time, it is truly relaxing. While giving life to my imaginative animal beings I invariably start to smile. The inspiration for my whacky folks I find in puns and word plays», he says with a laugh. As for the word plays, he picks them up in everyday life or juggles them himself. So, states or conditions get personified by him, like the famous German «innerer Schweinehund» – the nasty inner son of a bitch that tempts you to be lazy or undecided, always tending to the short end of the stick. Seasonal articles like dwarves for Christmas or rabbits and chicks you'll never find in his assortment. He rather prefers that his creatures cause fun and joy all year long, so he sells them throughout the year on artisans' fairs or markets.

A Home for Little Animals

Behind his «crazy felt creatures», as he calls them, are always little stories which make every sourpuss smile widely in the end. «Laughing is the highest measure of joy and well-being. I truly cherish being able to arouse this reaction or the emotions behind it. Even at school, I was the class clown and I crashed many a party with my silly ways, that's just the way I am!» When talking about his objects, he enjoys the double entendres and puns that name them, some of them a trifle raunchy. But good-natured all the way. His clients invariably want to know. «Are the teeth genuine?» And grinning, he answers: «Of course! I think that each being has a right to have something to bite.» A trademark of his figurines are indeed ungainly real sets of teeth. Another is that each creature should have a proper home. Be it in a miniature bathroom, a snail shell, a watchcase, in discarded things or mostly in a far too small cage. This makes for many questions and he entertains his eager clientele with fancy explanations. «I don't need a stage, although many see me on one. I carry my own stage.»

Funny Felted Folks

Since he cannot subsist off chuckles, air and love he teaches felting courses, both privately and in schools, hospitals and other social institutions. For three years now, he has worked as a lecturer at the

adult education center in Brandenburg/Havel and has gathered a big fan crowd there. He offers two workshops. At «Die verrückte Viecher-Filzerei (Funny Felted Folks)» he shows in a three-hour course how these tiny figurines are made in his style. With «MaleFilz» a three-dimensional painting with wool threads on a needle felt mat is made. The finished object is then put in a 3D-picture or in just a frame without glass. Here as well, Christian König ends up with satisfied and proud students, as well he should.

LARA PYTER

Further Information

Christian König's feltmaking venture is mobile, so he can visit his clients directly. Those who have never felted before can learn the dry felting technique and they can choose from many colorful kinds of wool. His work brightens up anniversaries, birthdays, company and Christmas holidays.

Web: koenigs-filzerei.de
Instagram [@koenigsfilzerei](https://www.instagram.com/koenigsfilzerei)

PAGES 32-35

Felting On a Ball

Natasha Smart from Great Britain has specialized on making three-dimensional, structural felt objects like baskets, bags and backpacks. They are all made on a ball

After studying modern languages, i.e. German and Russian at the university, Natasha Smart's main career was as a civil servant in London for nearly 24 years. A true change of life occurred when she moved to Devon in the UK south west in 2015. The 54-year-old artist now lives together with her husband and her three beloved Tonkinese cats in a modern house in the seaside town of Exmouth in Devon, which is situated with water on two sides, the river Exe and the sea. «As a child, I was very much into crafts, in particular sewing which I learned from my maternal grandmother. As an adult I really wanted to explore the textile field further, so in 2005 I was fortunate to be able to go part-time in my job. I started a one-year Foundation Course in Textiles that included wet-felting», Nathasha Smart

tells us. It turned out soon that she enjoyed the textile technique the most.

Exciting Results

She is mainly wet-felting now and has specialized in the making of 3D, structural projects. Full of enthusiasm, she proceeds: «I really love the organic and unpredictable patterns, colors and textures which result from the bonding of wool fibres and other embellishments to create felt.» This is particularly the case with her main technique of felting on a ball, in which you are working in reverse, creating the design first on the ball before covering it in wool fibre and beginning the felting process», Smart explains. It's not until the felting stage is completed and brought to prefelt stage that the ball can be removed. Then you can see how the finished design has turned out. It is much different from normal felting, since carded wool threads were used instead of the usual Merino rovings.

«It is a wholly different process to normal flat felting and a very different process to of laying out the fibre and agitating it», according to the felt artist. Felting on a ball first came about in the 1970ies as a way of creating hats. «In the past years, I've been experimenting to expand the range of items which can easily be made on the ball, like baskets, backpacks, differently-shaped bags, lampshades or cushions.»

Feltmaking as Her Main Profession

In October 2021 she left her part time job in the local government administration to become a fulltime wet felting artist, tutor and author. She remembers:«Then it felt like a major decision and potential risk, but now I regard it as one of the best decisions I have made. I've had some amazing opportunities, such as three separate trips to the US, to Texas to film online wet felting tutorials with the company Living Felt, a wet felting supplies and tutorials enterprise. I have met many other feltmakers online via the social media or in person, often during my workshops and follow other creatives online which has opened up a vast world of creativity to me personally.»

Practical Items with a Certain Structure

Natasha Smart mainly uses carded wool, fleece or rovings which are most suitable to be felted on a ball. The artist hardly ever uses a sketchbook, but mostly she gets an idea in her head of something

she wants to develop. She jots down some calculations to work out sizes and then she launches straight in. She usually makes several versions of a design until she is happy with it. For the felt backpack on a ball design in her new book she made 10 different versions until she was satisfied and the design worked well both structurally and in terms of pattern. The felt artist weighs everything, to ensure consistent results, so she thinks of her felting projects very much like recipes for others to follow.

The Sea as an Inspirational Source

«I'm very interested in the natural world, not in a representative way or to exactly replicate it but more in terms of the patterns and colors. I have collected shells since I was a child, so the beach and sea, stones and fossils have always been a big inspiration», she says when asked about what inspires her work. She often employs seams and beads to make the felted surface more interesting. She developed a way of felting in metal rings to the sides of her bags and on the backside of a backpack to enable the quick addition of a clip-on strap to finish. «I also sew-on magnetic clasps or install items like a turn-lock clasp. I like a modern, neat and professional finish to my bags and backpacks».

LARA PYTER

Natasha Smart

In 2022, Natasha Smart published her first book «Wet Felting creating texture, pattern and structure» and in 2024 «Three-dimensional Wet Felting on a Ball». Once a week she offers wet felting workshops in her own garden studio. You can also find an online tutorial to make felted bags and three other online courses at (<https://feltingtutorials.com/>).

Web: <https://natashasmarttextiles.co.uk>

Mail: natashasmarttextiles@gmail.com

YouTube: @NatashaSmartTextiles

Online shop: <https://folksy.com/shops/NatashaSmartTextiles>

Instagram: @natashasmarttextiles

Facebook: @NatashaSmartTextiles

PAGES 36-39

Tutorial: A decorative fringed clutch purse

In this easy to follow wet felting tutorial by Natasha Smart, learn how to make a decorative fringed clutch purse. This step-by-step tutorial shows you how to bring extra pattern and texture to your wet felting using wool yarns and curly wool locks as embellishments. Suitable for beginners as well as experienced felters looking to try out a different technique, this project also shows you how to work with a flat resist to create a three-dimensional pocket form, resulting in a beautiful embellished felt purse. Finished measurements: 21cm wide x 14cm high (8.25" x 5.5") approximately

Materials

- ✎ Approximately 50g of any carded wool fibre in your chosen colours (I've used black carded Finnwool batt fibre)
- ✎ Approximately 15m (50ft) in total of two or three thick and thin-type wool yarns (these are wool yarns with thick parts which look like wool tops or roving. I've used one wool thick and thin yarn, Point Five from Colinette Yarns (www.colinetteyarns.com), and two bamboo/wool mix thick and thin yarns, Bamboozle from King Cole. Bamboo Bloom Handpaints is a similar yarn available from Universal Yarn). This equates to approximately 20 yarn lengths of 75-80cm (29.5-31.5") each
- ✎ Approximately 10-15g of hand-dyed long curly wool locks (I've used Masham locks from www.barn2yarnshop.com)
- ✎ Black leather-backed sew-in magnetic clasp
- ✎ Black embroidery thread

Tools

- ✎ 30cm x 23cm (12" x 9") rectangular 5-6mm (0.25") thick foam template
- ✎ Minimum 70cm x 40cm (29.5" x 16") piece of small bubble bubble wrap (or two 35cm x 40cm/14" x 16" pieces)
- ✎ Scales
- ✎ Large scissors
- ✎ Tape measure
- ✎ Ruler
- ✎ Washing up liquid and warm water solution
- ✎ Spray bottle
- ✎ Hard soap, eg olive oil soap

- ✎ Rubbing tool, eg dish cloth, wooden felting tool or just your hand
- ✎ Rolling tool, eg foam pool noodle float or pipe insulation foam
- ✎ Small piece of folded plastic, bubble wrap or foam
- ✎ Tea towel
- ✎ Large towel
- ✎ Sewing needle

Instructions

1 Preparing the wool fibre: Take your 50g of carded wool batt fibre and weigh/divide the total into quarters, i.e. 4 x 12.5g (two layers for each side of the template). Put each quarter aside.

2 Preparing the work surface: On a hard, water resistant work surface open out the bubble wrap, smooth side up. Position it so that half is your 35cm x 40cm (14" x 16") working area, with the other half ready to fold over onto the working half later. Lay the template on top of your working area, oriented portrait-style in front of you, along with one quarter of fibre.

3 Laying out the fibre (layer one, side one): Taking the first quarter allocation of wool batt fibre, peel the layers apart to make fine sheets and tear them to match the size of the template or create a patchwork of pieces to fit. Lay them on top of the template, creating an even thickness. Ensure the edges of all pieces are wispy and overlap each other slightly.

4 Finishing the fibre layout (layer one, side one): Overlap the side and bottom edges of the template with the fibre by 2-3cm (1") but stop laying fibre just short of the top edge. Keep patting the fibre all over to test for thick or thin areas, either spreading them out to thin them or adding extra wisps to thicken them until the overall thickness of the fibre feels even.

5 Wetting the fibre: Gently spray warm soapy water solution all over the fibre rectangle until soaked through, spraying from above to avoid disrupting the fibres. Fold the other half of the bubble wrap over the fibre rectangle to sandwich it. Press down and rub gently with your hands or the rubbing tool to disperse the soapy water throughout the fibre.

6 Folding the fibre around the edges: Turn the package over to side two

and gently peel back the bubble wrap. Spray the fibre overlap if dry and smooth it from side one onto side two, starting with the side edges and then the bottom edge. At the bottom corners where there is a fibre fold, fluff out the edges and smooth them down until neat and tight against the template.

7 Completing the fibre layout: Take your side two fibre allocation and repeat Steps 3-6 to complete the layer one layout on the second side. Then repeat twice more to complete layer two on both sides. Fluff out the top edge on both sides of the template, fold it back by 1-2cm (up to 1") and smooth it down to create a neater, firmer top edge.

~ **Extra tip:** We are using two separate layers of wool fibre to help create an even layer overall which is tightly wrapped around the template. To avoid bulky side seams and corners, lay slightly less overlapping fibre around the edges of the template on layer two.

8 Adding the first yarn decoration: Take the first yarn, leave a 7cm (3") fringe at the top end and continue laying it out vertically along the fibre/template, from the top edge to the bottom edge, pressing to secure. Carefully turn over the template and lay the yarn back up the other side, again leaving a fringe end. Repeat 4-5 times, varying the yarn placement each time.

~ **Extra tip:** It is essential for this project that you use wool yarns with a high wool content (and not superwash) to ensure that they felt successfully with the main wool fibre.

9 Adding further yarn decoration: Repeat Step 8 with at least one other yarn, until you have wrapped at least 10 pieces of yarn in total around the template, from the top end on one side round to the top end on the other, leaving a 7cm (3") fringe each end. Press the yarn into the fibre to wet and secure it, and avoid laying yarn within 3cm (1") of the side edges.

10 Adding curly locks (side one): Spread long wisps of curly locks apart with your fingers and lay them all over the fibre and yarns on one side of the template, varying the placement and ensuring that some of the locks extend 7cm (3") from both the top edge (as fringe) and the bottom edge (to overlap to the other side). Spray with soapy water to secure.

11 Adding curly locks (side two): Fold the other half of the bubble wrap over the fibre to sandwich it. Press down and rub gently with your hands or the rubbing tool to flatten and smooth the locks. Peel back the bubble wrap and turn the template over. Smooth the bottom edge locks overlap onto side two and repeat Steps 10 and 11 to complete adding the locks.

12 Adding final yarns: To add to the texture and pattern, repeat Step 8 to add a final top layer of 5-10 wraps of any of the yarns. Once happy with the design layout, insert a piece of thin folded plastic or bubble wrap between the fringe yarns at the top end to ensure the fringes do not felt together. Give both sides of the fibre a good spray with soapy water.

13 Rubbing the fibre: Replace the top layer of bubble wrap and spend 15-20 minutes rubbing the fibre package, one side at a time and avoiding the fringe, rubbing in a vertical direction to cause least disruption to the yarn placement. Then peel back the bubble wrap and check the yarns for movement by gently rubbing your fingers over the surface.

14 Final rubbing: If there is considerable yarn movement, replace the bubble wrap and continue to rub the fibre package through it, checking regularly for movement. Once the yarns are mostly staying in place, remove the bubble wrap and rub the package all over with soapy hands on both sides for 5-10 minutes until they are no longer moving.

15 Rolling the fibre: Replace the top layer of bubble wrap to sandwich the fibre. Roll up the package around the rolling tool, then roll the whole lot up in a tea towel. Roll the package away from you to arm's length and back again, counting as one roll. Roll 100 times. Unwrap the package, gently tug the fibre back into shape and separate the fringes.

16 Continuing to roll: Turn the package 90 degrees clockwise and repeat Step 15 three more times until the fibre has been rolled 100 times on each edge. Then turn over and repeat on the reverse, to make 800 rolls in total. Continue to tug the fibre back into shape if misshapen (especially the top edge) and separate the fringes between sets of rolls.

17 Removing the template: Carefully remove the plastic from between the fringes and the foam template. Squeeze some of the excess soapy water out of the fibre, which is now becoming felt. Put your hand inside the felt purse shape and rub all over to check the fibres inside are bonded. If not, spend a few minutes rubbing the inside. Reshape.

18 Measuring the purse flap: Decide which fringe side you prefer as the purse flap and lay your chosen side face down on the work surface, with the felt laying portrait-style and the fringe ends nearest to you. Measure 16cm (6.25") down from the bottom end. Use a ruler to rub a temporary indented line horizontally across the felt at the 16cm (6.25") mark.

19 Cutting the purse flap: Carefully cut along each side edge of the piece you are removing, up to the 16cm (6.25") mark, ensuring you cut inside of the side edges by 5-10mm (0.25") to account for later shrinkage of the flap. Cut horizontally across the felt along the indented line and remove the felt piece, leaving the flap to fold down over the main purse pocket. Extra tip: Follow Steps 20-22 to complete felting the offcut to use in another project!

20 Rubbing the purse flap edges: If preferred, cut around the top corners of the flap to round them off. Then spend 5-10 minutes rubbing all three cut edges with soapy hands to firm them up. NB Rubbing along the edges with them in between your fingers is a good way of achieving this.

21 Throwing the felt: Loosely pick up the felt and throw it down onto the work surface approximately 300-350 times, to shrink and harden it, in blocks of 50 (throw 50, reshape, throw 50 etc). Stop when the purse (with the flap closed) has shrunk to around 21cm wide x 14cm high (8.25" x 5.5"), the felt feels thick and the surface has a natural crinkle.

22 Finishing the felt: Rinse the felt under warm running water, or soak in a bowl of warm water, until the water runs clear. Squeeze and then reduce the excess by rolling the felt up in a dry towel, then reshape and leave to air dry. Once dry, trim the fringe to a consistent shape/length just above the bottom of the purse (I trimmed to 6cm/2.5").

23 Sewing the clasp: If preferred, hand-sew a magnetic clasp fastener to the reverse of the flap using embroidery thread in a matching colour to the purse. Position one part of the clasp on the inside of the flap, centrally and approximately 1cm (0.5") from the flap edge. Match the other part of the clasp on the reverse of the purse front and hand-sew to finish.

INSTRUCTIONS: NATASHA SMART

PAGES 40-43

Painting With Felt

Cross-fading, like in painting with water colors is characteristic of Susanne Weber's felted «paintings» The Viennese artist loves the play of light, fibers and secrets. Her ingenious mix-techniques show that felting has hardly any limits

«I had no idea what felting was, but in a mail circle I first got to know the craft. I read about it and after a week I received my first wool package and I have never stopped felting since», Susanne Weber tells us. «After having seen objects from English felt artists, I was so impressed that I decided on the stop to try my hands in felted paintings in the future», so the 62-year-old artist. Together with her husband, her daughter, son-in-law and her one-year-old grandson she lives in Vienna. She also likes to spend time in her weekend house and the 5000 square meter garden in the middle of the Wienerwald. For many years, the trained biologist used to work as a freelance medical translator.

Felting – A Varied Form of Art

The artist is a dyed-in-the-wool wet felter. This technique allows her to work in the cross-fading technique (usually from one or two photographs), a method known also in watercolor painting. The finer parts are needle-felted but she keeps wet-felting across those areas. The steps are repeated until she is satisfied with the result. Enthusiastically, she reports: «The most wonderful thing, of course, is the morphing of loose threads into a firm piece of felt. Felting, in my opinion, is the most all-round art form there is. You can paint and sculpt with it and mix it with other media. The sky is the limit!» The feltmaker owns several spinning wheels

and likes to spin raw wool, partially from her «godmother» sheep in Wales. Spinning and dyeing mostly takes place in her Wienerwald garden – e.g. with acid dyes in the microwave oven or with solar-dyeing with her garden plants. She often works in mixed-media techniques and paints with pastels, water colors, acrylic colors and coal. She prints self-invented patterns and motifs onto cotton fabrics and felts those parts in. In the near future she will use more digital techniques – like a combination of print and felt. To this end, she paints on different materials, makes collages out of them, takes pictures and finishes them on the computer, with different filters and cross-fading effects.

A Full-Time Feltmaker

Since 2023, Susanne Weber has worked as a full-time felt artist and she is a member of the Austrian Professional Institution of Fine Artists. She reflects on her new life: «I wake up in the morning and look forward to working. For instance, I design an exhibition flyer, I unpack parcels with materials, I keep notes for another painting series, try to perfect my website, I look for suitable wool for the incoming orders and at the end of a busy day I watch the last instalment of an online course sipping a cup of tea.» She prefers wool of the Tyrolean Mountain Sheep to any other kind, and then bio-certified wool from the Slovenian Mountain Sheep and Finn Wool, Merino too. She used to work with rovings, but in the meantime, she has learned to lay the wool out in such a way that it renders more effects than with fleeces. Silk in all shapes is just as crucial and she uses mainly Tussah and Peace silks. «But on principle, I'm a true fiber freak and I use them all – bamboo, soy, linen, hemp but also viscose, Trilobar and Firestar fibers», she specifies.

Art Should Give Pleasure

The artist is inspired by many things, for example trips, landscapes or faces. «I am careful to choose the right kind of wool and the other fibers with which I want to achieve certain effects», she says. The image itself is freely made on a woolen basis, she doesn't sketch beforehand on stencils or pieces of fabric. «Wool is just magical, it always tells me how to proceed», Weber states. Typical for her art is that each series looks entirely different. «On and off, I use a sander for difficult textures or bigger surfaces, and I could not live without the tumbling cycle of my washing-machine. As for the future,

her big wish is to keep exhibiting her art as proof that felting has finally reached the present and can enrich the contemporary spectrum of fine arts. For a couple of months now I have been making image series with my own lyrics and YouTube videos – a challenge that gives me a lot of joy and certainly further ideas. There simply are no limits when it comes to felting.»

DIANA PYTER

Susanne Weber

On her website you can find an online gallery with all available felt paintings. A pdf catalogue will be sent upon request. The artist sells by recommendation or during national and international exhibits.

Website: susifilzt.at

Instagram: [@susifilzt](https://www.instagram.com/susifilzt)

YouTube: [@susifilzt](https://www.youtube.com/susifilzt)

PAGES 44-47

Tutorial: Felted Socks With a Massaging Effect

These felted socks not only keep your feet warm in the winter, but they have a healing effect as well. Since the wool used is really fine, the socks won't turn out soft, but have a marked massaging effect instead. This makes your feet warm in no time

Material

- ✎ Wool (Mountain Sheep mixes in fleece) – 48 g
- ✎ Viscose fibers – 16 g
- ✎ Soap and Water
- ✎ Scissors
- ✎ Laminate mat
- ✎ Synthetic fabric net
- ✎ Bubble foil

Instructions

Making a Stencil

A These felted socks correspond to size 38 German size. All measurements in the template are according to that size. The shrinking factor is 1.5. We make the stencil on the laminate mat.

B If you want to heighten or decrease the size you have to add your size or decrease it. For size 39 for example heighten the side from 43 cm to 44 cm.

Arranging Wool and Fleece

1 Before you start with laying out the wool it is required to divide the wool and viscose fibers into four parts. You get four parts wool, each 12 g and correspondingly four parts of viscose each 4 g.

2 Put the stencil onto the bubble foil and distribute a thin layer of fleece on one half of the stencil, 12 g.

3 Now cover the other half also with 12 g of wool. Let the fibers stick out a bit over the stencil's edge, around 1.5 to 2 cm.

4 Moisten the wool with soapy water and rub the workpiece through the synthetic net. Take care that the wool is evenly moistened and that rubbing causes a soapy foam.

5 Remove the net carefully. Cover the surface with bubble foil and turn the «sandwich» over.

6 Remove the bubble foil and bend the protruding wool fibers over the stencil.

7 Lay out the wool like on the other side. Try to stop in front of 1 cm towards the stencil's edge. Don't forget to lay out the wool evenly. Onto each half we lay out 12 g of wool.

8 Moisten the wool with soapy water and rub again through the net. Distribute the viscose fibers evenly. Where the foot is supposed to be the viscose is laid out more densely. This makes the heel part sturdier. Moisten the workpiece through the net with soapy water and rub. Then carefully remove the net and cover the stencil with bubble foil. Bend the viscose fibers over the stencil's edge. Repeat those steps on the other side as well.

Felting

9 We wind up the workpiece in a roll and roll it 30 to 40 times in each direction

10 With light pressure we rub the felt piece with a rubber glove.

11 Those steps are repeated until the felt piece is sturdy and the stencil can be removed. Pull it out. Cut the woolen form in shape with the scissors. We measure the length of the workpiece, find the middle and mark it.

12 Cut with great care along the marked line with the scissors.

13 Then take the stencil out

14 Press the surplus water out and continue felting. Throw the workpiece 40 to 50 times. Smooth it with your hands and continue throwing.

15 Then roll the workpiece 30 to 40 times in different directions. Throughout all that throwing, rolling and flattening it is crucial that you keep checking on the shrinking factor.

16 If you want to even out the edges of the socks or if you prefer a little part in the back to pull them up, cut the socks accordingly

17 Felt the socks again for some time. Rinse them and pull them over shoe lasts.

18 If you have no lasts, you can form the sock directly on your foot. This is also a good way to find the perfectly fitting shape.

19 If needed, continue to felt further. Bear in mind that the size may have shrunken after drying 1 or 1.5 cm. P.S. The viscose gives an excellent texture, it slightly shines and resembles snowfall. If you like, add embroideries or patterns in the dry-felting technique.

INSTRUCTIONS: NATALIE MARTIN

Natalie Martin

She cherishes the meditative and healing process of feltmaking and loves to pass her enthusiasm and expertise on. Her felted garments and home decoration articles are not only practical but bring you into a good mood.

Instagram: [@felt_my_love](#)

PAGES 48-51

The Use of Colors is at the Core of Everything

Lisette Smulders de Groote loves bright colors, dots and roses and is seeking to inspire others to experiment more with a given array of colors. Her felted objects resemble indeed fireworks and convey her unending joy in experiments

The 52-year-old Dutch lady Lisette Smulders de Groote lives with her husband Okke de Groote and her three children - Roosmarijn, Laban und Tijm, together with a cat and a dog in their comfy, colorful house in Rosmalen, a small village near the pretty town Den-Bosch. Even as a child she learned creative techniques in the Waldorf school, the beginning of a veritable thread through her life.

Wool Experiments

«I always have loved natural products. When my kids entered grade school I had more time during the day. I started to experiment with wool in general and then I found feltmaking», says Lisette Smulders de Groote. Her first felted object was a colorful sailor's doll that she had designed herself. Pretty soon she began to host workshops herself where matryoshkas were made. «A great asset of this workshop was that the participants became acquainted with both the wet-felting technique and needle-felting. It was a great success and for me a fine start to experiment in workshops.» When the interest in her art grew she broadened her workshops offers. The artist tells us: «They take place in my cozy home or in the garden, and it pleases me to no end to hear the students talk afterwards how inspired they are by the many colors or wool and how these are reflected in the interior styling of our house. What is so beautiful about my working with wool is the sensation of wonder it creates in me and also the people that come to my workshops.»

Founding Her Own Enterprise

Initially, Lisette Smulders de Groote worked mainly in the wet-felting technique, but recently she prefers dry- or needle felting. She loves the fine touch these felting needle techniques embody. In 2013 she started her own small business venture called «Viltering». Apart from feltmaking, she works as a coach for

personal development. Of course, both professions can be combined. The artist describes situations from her working days: «Sometimes it becomes difficult to talk about yourself and your troubles. It is much easier to talk to someone who is also a creative, everybody seems to live out their own personal issues when they make felt. Isn't that just great?»

Intuitive and Spontaneous Work

Lisette Smulders de Groote's objects come to life spontaneously and intuitively. Nothing is planned beforehand. Mostly, she has only a vague idea what she wants to make, for example a wool bowl. She just starts out, her hands do the work and her head is quiet and empty, like during meditation. During the felting process she keeps having other creative ideas, such as: Could I decorate this bowl with oranges or lemons, or with lines combined with cherries? «My principle with all that I do is: Does it make me happy? I am firmly convinced that this kind of energy becomes visible to those who are touched and inspired by my work», so the artist. She loves playing with colors and motifs in her felt work. Shapes and themes that often return in her work owe themselves to the styling of her home. «I like to surround myself with bright colors and in my art, I like to challenge people to use more color and sometimes to step out of their comfort zone», she says with a smile. ~ In addition to working with wool, Lisette Smulders de Groote she has also been experimenting with clay lately, a material that really appeals to me and is wonderful to work with. Her enthusiasm is tangible: «I especially enjoy glazing the clay, it allows me to fully express my creativity and work with color. It's fun to work on this every now and then in addition to felting and to take beautiful photographs the results. Photography also is a great love of mine, as can be seen in my social media accounts.» Upon looking back, the artist can sense an increasing development of a highly personal style. «This is the real me, and people see and recognize that and they keep it in high regard. This is indeed wonderful.», Lisette Smulders de Groote is convinced.

DIANA PYTER

Lisette Smulders de Groote

The Dutch felt artist is well-known for her brightly-colored felt workshops. Her

felting skills are on offer with or without a personal coaching.

Website: viltering-coaching-craft.nl
Instagram: @viltering

PAGES 52-53

On Brightly-Colored Soles

The artist Gerti Gruisinga from Zons at the Rhine is famous for her brightly colored, unique felted shoes. Her technique is called crochet feltmaking. In the filzfun she tells us how to proceed best

During craft class at school Gerti Gruisinga, who worked as a doctor's assistant for more than 33 years, first learned about crocheting. But decades passed until crocheting entered her life anew. It had a lot to do with the death of her beloved Granny about ten years ago. «In Grandma's papers and possessions I found some wool balls. After a long phase of not being able to work, they came in handy. I had good use for creativity and bright, joyful colors and I started crocheting again», Gerti Gruisinga remembers.

~ After she had crocheted around nearly every item of her household – from lampshades to car wheels, she researched what else she could crochet and found felting wool. On YouTube she found a tutorial how to crochet felted shoes. She received her first shipment of felting wool and off she went. From those times, she recalls: «I showed my first ventures on Facebook, naturally. But I was really surprised by how many people said: «Can you make me some too?» The felted shoes turned out to be quite special and so she began to work on order, and is still doing it. «There is always a certain demand and once my clients wear them they hardly want to take them off anymore. They are super light, never constricting and even people with sore feet can wear them. Anyway, I work on order, always considering the special requirements my clientele has», Gerti Gruisinga says. She loves most making shoes that differ in color – rather original and something you don't often encounter.

Making Felted Shoes

For a good felt result – whether felted shoes, bags, mats, cat lairs, little felted

baskets or carpets – she recommends to but at least 1250 g of crocheted material into the washing machine. A pair of shoes weigh – according to size – about 250 g. «I always put five to six pairs together into the washing machine, this made for the best result so far. If I have only one or two pairs, I add an old towel to give enough rubbing resistance.» The shoes are washed with a fluid detergent and without fabric softener. She recommends the Pflegeleicht Program at 1 hour and 40 minutes plus tumbling at 1200 revs per minute. After the washing cycle, the artist pulls the shoes over the matching lasts, for this makes for the best shape and desired size. She tells us further: «Then I put the shoes onto a small bench near the heating. In summer, they dry in the open. Once the shoes have dried for a day, I paint the sole on with natural rubber using an approx. 5 cm wide flat brush.» In Gerti Gruisinga's YouTube channel «Gerti G. Die HäkelFee (The crocheting fairy)» she shows several video tutorials how she puts the sole on. «I have been able to help some people to provide their shoes with an anti-skid sole». Gerti Gruisinga has developed her own special method to put on the sole rubber so that the shoes become durable and last for a long time.

LARA PYTER

Further Information

Whoever is interested in crocheting/feltmaking will find a wealth of ideas under Gerti Gruisinga's accounts:

Facebook: «Zwei Hände und 1000 Ideen»
– Gerti G.

Instagram: @FilzSchluppyFee

YouTube: @Gerti G. Die HäkelFee

Etsy: [filzschluppyfee.etsy.com](https://www.etsy.com/shop/filzschluppyfee)

PAGES 54-57

Sheep Pens in Caves

On Iceland's south coast there are man-made caves in front of the Hella village. They served as living quarters, sheep pens and storage space. Margit Röhm took a trip there to the «Caves of Hella» and she reports on what she experienced on Iceland

It's not exactly called for that a professional felter should choose to spend a holiday on Iceland, of all places.

You simply cannot forget your vocation there. Literally at every corner you are bound to meet sheep, wool and art work, and that makes it hard to ban all thoughts concerning work. But felting, at least, does not play an important role there and so it largely remained a private enterprise, complete with sight-seeing and the like. Volcanoes, lava fields, endlessly stretching landscapes where you won't see a living soul, huge waterfalls and naturally, sheep aplenty you see everywhere on this island. Of course, you won't miss seeing the famous Iceland Sheep and you try to take good photos. The sheep belong to Iceland's image abroad, as do the horses and the glaciers. Good photos of these beautiful animals and their newborn lambs are not so easy to take. Iceland Sheep are rather reserved folks, they live wild on the huge pastures and most probably they are sick and tired of tourists. I have refrained from photographer's ambitions and just took a few photographs. After all, we had not come for the sheep alone.

Man-Made

Without having counted on it beforehand, we found ourselves right in the middle of a sheep- and shepherd story. This is Iceland for you, you have to give yourself time and space to fully take the landscapes and sights in. We were driving on the ring road. Looking for a parking space, we suddenly found ourselves in front of a non-descript building with its sign «Hella Caves». Caves, here?

☞ We're curious, so we booked a guided tour on the next day without the slightest inkling what we were to expect. The internet did not give enough information, just that the caves in questions were all man-made and nobody knows exactly when man did that. This was promising. The guided tour was very entertaining. We were led to four caves of differing size that were probably dug out by Irish monks more than 1000 years ago and were left again after Iceland was settled by the Norsemen.

☞ These caves have been open to the public since 2018, but only partially made accessible as a tourist attraction. There are an estimated 200 of such caves, some big, others small. They were above all living spaces, where two monks could live and pray. Some of the bigger caves were probably used as meeting places or prayer rooms. But all this is speculation, nobody really knows nor has ever researched more closely into the matter. But all Icelanders have known of their

existence for hundreds of years. They never fell into oblivion but were busily used, without anybody knowing what they really are or who made them. They were perfect storing space for hay and straw and to this day, Icelanders use them to store crop plants.

Winter Quarters for Flocks

Pragmatism prevails on Iceland, so the caves were used to keep the flocks in winter. It is known that since the beginning of the 19th century, the farmers used to drive their flocks into the caves when the cold season began. They spent the winter there, protected from wind and snow. With their perfect air circulation, constant temperature and moisture the caves were ideal to serve as wintering grounds. Admittedly, I stood in the dark caves and my animal-protective heart hurt thinking that the animals had to stay there for months in the dark, without daylight or chance of running around. But in an instant, I found myself laughing: «Daylight on Iceland in winter?» There just isn't any. The sheep would graze in the dark also outside the caves, but it would have been much colder and they would be covered with snow. Again, the Icelandic pragmatism: If you find a cave on your property, you put it to use, a notion that seems sensible under extreme climate conditions like that. Only as of the middle of the 20th century, archeologists and historians finally took an interest in the caves. As of 1967 they no longer serve as sheep pens but are solely used in scientific explorations.

MARGIT RÖHM

Further Information

Margit Röhm, an enthusiastic feltmaker for 15 years already, is the 1st board member of the Filznetzwerk e.V. She regularly takes part in artisans' markets and exhibitions. She hosts felting courses and passes on her knowledge concerning wool and sheep breeds in books and magazines. triluna.de

☞ Interesting things to know about the caves please find under cavesofhella.is

PAGES 58-61

«Fönsel Is My One and Only»

Conny Philipp has been captivated by sheep for 14 years now, and the fascination persists to this day. Her sheep graze for fun and also for landscape preservation

Her partner Roland was the one who kindled the love for sheep in Conny Philipp. Together with his brother, he is a third-generation farmer, albeit a part-time one, in the Aargau canton in Switzerland. Conny Philipp lives in Lörrach, directly at the German border, but she spends most weekends in Switzerland. When she first visited the farm there were 80 to 100 Spiegel Sheep, black-and-brown Jura Sheep and Moorschnucke. After the first shearing, Conny Philipp saw the huge sacks full of wool. She learned this was considered more or less garbage. She thought up a better use. First felting experiments followed and, in the end, she decided to attend the Oberrot Felting School and successfully trained as a felting designer.

A Close Relationship with Fönsel

Her partner gave up sheep keeping for business purposes over time, since there was no way to make profit considering the hard labor. But when that happened, Conny already knew quite a lot about sheep and their keeping. «I helped when their claws were cleaned, when they had to take deworming medicine, when they were moved to new pastures and I took care of the little lambs. I will never forget the first birth. I kept waiting anxiously until every lamb was born. What a wonderful experience!», the feltmaker fondly recalls. Her dearest animal was born about nine years ago, Alfons, called Fönsel. During her weekends she always spends hours with him and over the years they have formed a strong bond, as she tells us: «I can literally go for a walk with him, he keeps running after me like a little dog. Fönsel is my absolute number one of all four-legged creatures.»

Her Own Wallis Blacknoses

Thanks to Roland and her brother-in-law's support she was able to make another dream come true: to keep her own Wallis Blacknose sheep. During a visit at her herb friend from Wallis, she saw on an alpe her first Blacknose Sheep. She was immediately taken by how they look and

how beautiful their curls are. In 2020, she bought her own three animals in the Wallis. «On the farm there is still all infrastructure left for sheep keeping, so I was able to start breeding them right away. These days my little flock counts 11 heads of sheep», she reports. The Blacknoses are undemanding mountain sheep. They have wool all over their bodies and have horns. They make for great ewes and their character is very pleasant.

Sheep for Therapy

The sheeps' duty is to graze the meadows that are not worked on. For this purpose, there are dens right outside the farm house and one below a field, in a fruit-tree orchard. «For me my sheep are like therapists. When I come on the weekends after a stressful week my first way is to the sheep. Their greeting always warms the cockles of my heart», she says happily. «First, Fönsel comes running to me, then the other little Blacknoses. They all want to be cuddled and greeted. My two hands are not enough.» Twice a year there are shearings. Initially, they employed a professional shearer, but now she does it herself. The sheep are made to stand on a stall and are shorn standing up. During the professional shearing we had several cases of injuries, for the shearers work at a piece rate. «Naturally, it takes me longer, but then there aren't as many cuts», Philipp states. In her little studio in Lörrach she makes interior decoration, for instance cushions or storm lamps from the wool.

Herbal Medicine

Next to her flock and feltmaking, she is also an expert on herbal medicine. She leads hikes where people can collect herbs and tends an herb garden at the farm. Even for her flock, this comes in handy: Some illnesses and diseases can be cured or bettered by certain herbs. The farm works according to the IP Suisse rulings, their trademark is a ladybug. They promote environmental-friendly and foster animal welfare. «As far as animal welfare is concerned, we do much more than laid down in the rulings. It is of utmost priority to us.»

LARA PYTER

Feltmaking Opening With Fönsel

For next spring, an opening is planned on the farm. The theme is processing sheep curls and making interior decoration objects. During breaks, one

can visit the flock and get to know the amiable animals. For lack of space, participants must not number more than six people. Dates and inquiries at: conny.philipp@t-online

PAGES 62-63

The Battle Against Moths

In the last instalment of the Moth series, Mari Nagy and István Vidák report on effective methods to battle those pests – beginning with traditional remedies and offering surprising, new ones

Most people know lavender blossoms from the little sachets you can buy. Their strong scent does keep moths away, but unfortunately not forever. Over time, the plant loses its essential oils and the moths will come back to the woolen textiles. Also, the leaves of the Walnut tree can give a certain protection, because the green leaves contain strong essential oils as well. In the olden days, people put walnut leaves in between newspapers and placed them between the woven carpets. From spring to fall this is a valid remedy, but not for a whole year. The walnut leaves have to be fresh to work. In June, a wildflower is blossoming, the moth mullein. It gets about a meter in height and its white or yellow blossoms have a strong smell. You can harvest this plant for months. It also protects from moths, but again only when freshly harvested.

Good Protection with Neem Oil

As to plants that grow in other places than Europe, we recommend the oil of the Neem tree. This oil smells strongly, intensively with a bitter note. The cold-pressed, thick oil is made from the leaves and seeds and should be thinned down with water or alcohol. You spray it on the woolen items. Spray on 10 to 20 ml of the solution onto a square meter at a distance of 30 to 40 cm evenly. Repeat the treatment after a week. In the best case, your treasured things are protected from moths for over a year.

Airing Out Clothes

It helps greatly to air out wool garments or textiles at the end of the summer and

in spring. Moths don't like fresh air and might look for other places to lay their eggs. Another method is to heat up smaller items for a short time at 200 degrees in the oven. Wool garments can be also put into the freezer for four to five days. Both methods can be used alternately since the hidden eggs cannot survive these shifts in temperature. Then spray the textiles thoroughly with Neem oil.

Smoking

Smoking is the oldest and most effective protective method that was used often by travelers in the olden days. The thin branches of the juniper tree are bound together like a flower bouquet. Set the ends on fire, then blow out the flame. The ensuing smoke settles in the surface of the wool. Admittedly, this makes for a grey hue, but with big-size felted items, such as yurts, this doesn't matter. The big felted cloth widths were smoked each fall. Moths don't like the smell of fire and take flight.

∞ A Kyrgyz method we learned from the Kyrgyz lady felt master, Kendzsekan Toktosunova. She told us: «Here in Kyrgyzstan we use salt water when we make the felt blankets. In the end, when the blanket is almost ready, I dissolve a walnut-sized amount of salt in 8 to 10 l clean, cold water. The blanket is immersed in the solution and then dried. The moth larvae are not keen on the salty taste.»

Natural Moth Remedies

The cloth moths have a natural enemy, i.e. a kind of parasitic wasp. They like to put their eggs in moths' eggs on which their larvae in turn feed. They are very helpful at the beginning of the moth season in April and May as well as in the fall from September through October and prevent moth eating. The advantage of this kind of natural protection is that nature won't suffer. A simpler variant is a long tape impregnated with glue, where the flying insects get caught. These tapes neither represent a danger for human beings, as opposed to chemical remedies on sale. To finish we would like to mention another method – an electronic device that sends out high frequency sounds. We cannot hear them, but certain insects, moths included, are scared off by them. Also, here a 100 percent guarantee cannot be given, but they can function for years on end without a problem.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

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