

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #87, Summer 2025

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Dear Readers,

There are those special moments when light, warmth and inspiration enter into a symbiosis – like for example the first sun ray lighting up the studio and immersing a felted sculpture in gold. Precisely this magic we would like to capture with the summer issue of our magazine. Felt is anything but a winter issue. It thrives in summer as well, in colors, stories and the diversity of the different shapes it can take on.

Our female and male textile artists are living proof. As of page 42, we present the queer French felt artist Pierre-Yves Delannoy. «Fight for Your Values with Felt Art» is a touching portrait of a courageous person who conveys his values through his art. On pages 46 and 47, Heike Böhn invites us to celebrate the seasonal cycle with her objects – each a poetic pause for a moment.

Flóra Carlile-Kovács from Seattle brings nature and art together, shown as of page 28. Her felted lichens are more than a mere decorative item, they are a reminder that we should think our relationship with nature over. Ljubov Maier, in turn, gives old age a face. With lovingly felted grannies and grandpas she tells of reality in her art, as you can see on pages 54 and 55. These cute folks go right to the heart!

It gets seamlessly beautiful with Constanze Habringer-Krög, who designs felted garments all of a piece. – wearable

NOTE

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

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clothing that embraces the body. (Page 32 ff) As usual, we have practical tutorials that should kindle your joy in DIY: A funny worrywart, a felted bag for a beach summer and valuable advice how to felt in glass nuggets in an artistic way. For those who wish to know how a sheep farm is run, we recommend our report «Filz vom Wolf (Felt From Wolf)» (as of page 56). And of course, we venture further afar on the globe – amongst other places to Persia, where we get to know traditional felted carpets or to the exhibit of the Northeast Feltmakers Guild in the US. Moreover, we will report on the Felting Encounter of the Filznetzwerk Association that celebrates its 30th anniversary this year. So, summer has come, and in its wake our issue. It plainly shows that felt is so much more than just a kind of working material. It stands for expression, attitude and relationship.

We wish you much fun reading and we hope our varied themes may serve as an inspiration for you.

All the best,
Your filzfun team

Your direct contact to the editorial department:

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The autumn issue will be published on August 30th, 2025

Editorial deadline: June 13th, 2025

Workshop Tufting in the tim

Interested parties will learn the fascinating tufting craft and make their own fluffy carpet or tapestry. During the beginner's workshop in the Textile Museum tim on June 13th it will be demonstrated how you can make unique, colorful designs with a tufting gun. Advanced students design and make their own colorful carpets by using different guns of different pile heights. The host is Astrid Rehbock of the Aditas Studios from Haar.

Beginners' course:

13.06.2025 from 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.

Master class:

15.06.2025 10 a.m. – 5:30 p.m.

timbayern.de

Sheep Day in the Cloth Makers' Museum

Here it comes again: The annual Sheep Day will be held in the Tuchmachermuseum Bramsche on June 22nd 2025. For over 400 years, the Bramsche cloth makers have been processing sheep wool and wool blankets are made on the historic machinery to this day. In co-operation with the shepherds Norbert Stehmann and Jörg Langen, the Kunterbunte Wollspinnerey (a spinning manufacture) and further parties the sheep is in sole focus: Next to a show of different sheep breeds, the shearing of a complete flock and learning the duties of the shepherds' dogs, the public can attend demonstrations of ancient handicrafts such as spinning, weaving and dyeing of wool and/or participatory games and programs for children. This year as well, the Sheep Day market is supported by a market of regional bio-products organized by the Ökomodellregion Hasetal. Different bio-products like vegetables, cheese, bread and cakes are presented and sold.

tuchmachermuseum.de

Wanted: The New Felto Mascot

At the occasion of the ten-year anniversary, the felto Filzwelt in Soltau is calling for a design competition: Could felto not be a figure, a creature embodying both the Filzwelt and the world of feltmaking? And how would it look like? Knobby and cheeky, soft and cuddly, colorful or monochromatic? Might it be big or small, an animal, a human being or a hobgoblin? The sent-in proposals will be presented in the Filzwelt in Soltau. At the occasion of the anniversary on August 16th and 17th 2025 the favorite figure will be juried. The felto mascot will accompany guided tours and communication programs, support the public relations and advertise felt and feltmaking.

Deadline: July 31st 2025

Details concerning the tender offer at filzwelt-soltau.de

Homage to Charlotte Sehmisch

The feltmaker Charlotte Sehmisch's life work, consisting of extraordinary art objects and sculptures, will be on show at the University Library in Weimar until July 5th 2025. The felt artist passed away unexpectedly in 2024. In her felting art, she specialized in surface structural design and three-dimensional felts. Most of her objects were made in one single piece: headgear, scarves, clothes and wall reliefs. She is considered a pioneer of decisive techniques in the international manual feltmakers' scene and developed, among others, the reserve, lamella and block techniques. Her last objects deal with felts stretched on LED panels, thus creating complex three-dimensional structures by means of lighting.

uni-weimar.de

Dyeing in General and Dyeing Your Own Clothes

In the so-called Wampendobl Paradise a nuno felting course hosted by Charity van der Meer will be held from August 21st to 24th 2025. The workshop concentrates on the design and making of one-piece, chic wearable nuno clothing. At first the participants will make individual charts of color range, mix the respective colors and consult color theories and techniques. This combination of theory and practice should enable the students to dye intricate silk and wool fabrics. In the workshop you will learn the principles of calculating a felt piece by making an individual resist to make a small, wearable pattern piece. Further scheduled is the working-in of different textures to create rough surfaces. The only limit will be one's own imagination during those four days.

wampendobl.de

«Soaring High» During the Felters' Meeting 2025

Under the motto «Höhenflüge (Soaring High)», 68 participants from Germany and neighboring countries met at the Bildungszentrum of the Roggenburg Cloister for the annual felters' meeting of the Filznetzwerk Association from February 13th to 16th 2025.

For four days the focus was on getting to know each other, felting together, exchanges and two celebrations «30 years Felters' Meeting» and 20th anniversary of the Filznetzwerk. Under the motto «Soaring High» the organizing team presented a diversified program. Following a jolly dinner, Thursday evening began with miscellaneous information on the events, followed by the two-hour long annual general meeting, dealing with elections, the annual report and future projects. The rest of the evening was spent in jolly company. On Friday morning, the participants set out for an

excursion to Ulm where they attended a guided city tour in small groups. It was icy cold but this didn't damp the overall enthusiasm. They learned a lot about the city's history and the Ulm cathedral with the world's highest belfry (107 m). Equally interesting were the Lopsided House and the Lopsided Tower. Of course, the story of the Ulm tailor, Ludwig Berblinger, was told again, as well as the anecdote concerning the Ulm sparrow. Filled with interesting information, the party returned to Roggenburg by bus.

Different So-Called Impulse Workshops

After lunch, the so-called impulse workshops were scheduled in accordance with the motto. In one called «Finger Puppet Bat» a toy bat was felted. There were bats in all shapes and colors. The tutorial «Flying Objects Experiments» set out to determine whether at all and how felt could fly. Naturally, the objects aroused a lot of curiosity. The world's highest belfry was godfather to a workshop called «Architectural Skyrocketing». The felted towers were of considerable height and boasted impressive facades. In reference to the lead-glass windows in the cathedral, felted mosaics were made in the course «Mosaic Windows». The results showed shining colors on a dark background.

The Ulm Sparrow

The famous «Ulm Sparrow» was subject of yet another workshop, during which many individual hand puppets were made in different sizes and colors. The tutorial «Fluffy Clouds» dealt with felting cushions made of raw wool curls in different natural colors. The results were cuddly sitting furs. The people of Ulm used to travel by ship down the Danube in the olden days, which took quite some time. Maybe they sometimes wished for flying carpets in order to reach their destination sooner. In the workshop «Embroidered Flying Carpets», magical rugs with colorful embroideries were made. Our most sincere thanks go to the teachers of those impulse workshops for their excellent and committed tutoring. On Saturday morning and afternoon free felting was encouraged, objects received their final touch and there was a lot of lively shop talk.

Anniversary Celebration

This year's meeting was special for the two anniversaries mentioned above, celebrating felt and the members of the

association alike. In January all members were asked to felt flowers that should all be bound in a posy. May feltmakers complied and in the end 197 blossoms adorned the lobby and the festive tables in the hall.

∞ There was a festive act with a buffet on Saturday evening in the big hall of the cloister's inn. Beate Bossert, a feltmaker of the first hour, held an amusing lecture on both jubilees. Katia Hannig-Fischer had organized a quiz concerning the themes Ulm, Filznetzwerk and different exhibits, which was a lot of fun. The musical accompaniment was made by Yifan Du (percussion soloist and chamber musician) and Tim Waizenegger (Member of the Essen Philharmonic Orchestra). The sound of the marimba fascinated the audience and all agreed on the perfect ambience it created. After the official part was over there was an open-end get-together. On Sunday morning there was a small show of choice objects that were made during the event and then it was time to say good-bye. All will fondly remember the nice talks, feltmaking exchanges and bygone meetings and the relaxed atmosphere. Sincere thanks to the organizers Margit Röhm, Ilka Lehmann, Tanja Kahl, Katja Hannig-Fischer, Kerstin Waizenegger, Beate Bossert and Christine Rusch.

MARGIT RÖHM

Further Information

The Filznetzwerk Association wants to bring the public into closer contact with felt in all its rich facets; to facilitate networking between feltmakers and last but not least it would like to be a continuing source of inspiration. The offers are diversified, like for example the felters' meeting, the felters' course of lectures, regional meetings or felting actions initiated online plus workshops for personal, creative and skillful exchange, learning new techniques and deepening one's own knowledge. filznetzwerk.de

PAGES 12-13

A Celebration of the Senses

On January 22nd 2025, the door opened for a very special art even in Dresden. At the premises of the AXA main agency of Manuela Jähn, the artist Meike Raßbach showed chosen objects in a show titled «Unterwegs (On the Road)» that lasted until the end of March.

Meike Raßbach, who is well known in the felters' world also under her logo «Huhn Grünes», sees herself as a curious artist who loves to experiment. From raw wool curls, delicate wool fibers, fabrics, natural materials to objets trouvés – Meike Raßbach puts all of this to good use. This aspect was mirrored during the opening in several perfectly styled rooms. The artist attended the opening, talked to the visitors and patiently answered all questions regarding her work.

An Enthusiastic Traveler

The show was a veritable celebration of the senses – visual and haptic. Every now and then, one could watch a visitor who clandestinely touched an object – unbelieving and deeply impressed by the astounding effects. The well-attended opening offered a glimpse in the versatility of his travel-loving artist, from the optically intricate «Homage an G. Richter», finely rendered drawings, rustic veggie furs to translucent lighting objects, wall decoration and sculptures. ∞ The artists offered a little anecdote regarding her homage to Gerhard Richter, the most famous contemporary painter in Germany. All those tiny wool ends on the big size objects come from Oberrot, where Maïke Raßbach graduated from the felting school as a certified felt designer. She collected all these loose ends on roads, in hedges, on meadows and in corners and made them into this impressive object, inspired by Richter's scraping technique.

∞ Framed by guitar music and crowned by lovingly made food and drinks the opening continued for a long time with lively talks and exchanges.

BIRGIT BLUMRICH

Why «Huhn Grünes (Chicken Green)»?

Chickens are curious and always on the move. They search and find, scrabble

and cackle, they can run very fast but can act deeply absorbed. And, like Meike Raßbach, they like green plants and prefer to be out in the open. That is how the name came to pass. More information on Meike Raßbach at huhngruenes.de

PAGES 14-17

A Felted Highway

Each year in August, the Northeast Feltmakers Guild from the New England region in the US hosts a felting competition. The task for 2024 was «Ribbon of Highway». This is a line of the great song «This land is your land» by the famous folk singer Woody Guthrie. The objects inspired by that everlasting musical map were presented during a show in Basking Ridge, New Jersey.

A Highway Through the Exhibition

The theme of the competition organized by the Northeast Feltmakers Guild had each participant make a stretch of the highway out of a piece of grey gauze. There were many interpretations– some put the gauze onto felt, where it still was visible, others embedded it in the design so that it seemed almost gone. The finished pieces were to be hung in such a way that the gauze ribbon representing the highway became a single line. Varied techniques were used, some items were needle-, others wet-felted. Some objects were sewn together. Many artists used textured fabrics like lace, while others did bead embroidery. The designs as well were most diverse and ranged from still lifes to landscapes. Jessica Lurker Cavaliers' object «Great Swamp» showed a heron standing in water. This felt artist works extremely detailed and uses many layers of roving in order to achieve depth. Marcie Ziskind in her «Moving on, in a Dream State» presents wave-like objects and lines in bewitching colors. Memory Bradley depicted a trip through the desert in «Desert Drive» and Josephine Dakers-Brathwaite's art piece «Take me home» led her exactly there.

Installing the Exhibit

In October 2024, the show opened at the Environmental Education Center (EEC) in Basking Ridge, New Jersey. The EEC is an attractive institution with many beautiful hiking paths. They offer programs and

activities that people can attend within the premises and the surrounding area. Some guild members helped to mount the exhibit, a lucky occasion to see old friends again. The objects were fastened on grid walls with cable binders and brackets.

Interactive Elements

An interactive element was part of the show. The visitors were invited to move and turn flat wool squares on a table. A big table was set up with squares that had been previously made for last year's show titled «Connections». Each square has black lines that go in and out at the same place. It doesn't matter how the pieces are arranged or shifted; those lines always connect.

LARA PYTER

More Concerning the Northeast Feltmakers Guild

The Guild is a group of New England felt artists who aim to foster fiber art and to heighten the awareness for feltmaking processes. They also offer a forum for exchanges of techniques, resources, critique and marketing purposes. nefguild.org

PAGES 18-21

Children's Books and Felt

Children's books meet felt – for many years, Margit Röhm has been thinking about such a project. In part, she has realized the merging in different events and single works. Now she has her own show on this subject in co-operation with the Felto Filzwelt in Soltau starting August 16th 2025. In the following article, Margit Röhm reports on how it all began.

As a craftsperson, you are limited to a certain repertoire due to production logistics and space requirements for market booths. In my case, the space was occupied by hand-felted finger- and hand puppets and animal-shaped interior decoration. Last year, I added fruit for a toy shop and items for doll kitchens. I have so many ideas, and it had been itching me repeatedly to expand my product range. The solution was at hand: away from

selling at markets and fairs and into an exhibit with a special theme. Children's books meet felt – KiBuFi – I mustered all my courage and made a proposal to the Felto Filzwelt. They accepted.

Choosing the Literature

When a creative mind is let loose it is hard to rein it in. First question: Which books to choose? A favorite, a classic, a modern one, a children's poem, and antique book, from where do I start? So I read the good books again with the thought in mind what could be felted accordingly. In the end, I chose seven books, amongst them «Little Peter's Journey to the Moon», «The Little Prince» and «The Very Hungry Caterpillar».

☞ Deciding on which books to present was only the beginning, my mind still in chaos. There are so many scenes that invite being put in scene, and I had to decide which protagonists can be made figures and which not. I imagined the children visiting the show spontaneously taking on the roles of the human or troll figures and finding themselves in the right scene.

☞ It soon became clear that I would make neither humans nor trolls. I would do Sumsemann, of course and Jakob and Mauritius, the little prince's rose, the snake, the dragon, yes – a big felted dragon for the sea trolls. I frantically sketched, roamed through my wool storage and looked for upcycling materials, I felted test patterns and tried out surface structures. Everything became possible.

A Lot of Preparation Works

In each workshop corner there were stacks of already begun projects. Pre-felts awaiting their dyes, or those drying, wooden discs that would turn into seats for planetary chairs had to be painted. I spread out raw wool fleeces to find out whether they were suitable for the Big Dipper, which is the Big Bear in German, or whether I had to buy better materials. I made the first resists and slowly I began to unwind and the creative chaos became more orderly. Even if the sketches and object lists were still pinned to the board in two or three rows, the first scenes were finished, the wool heaps gradually became smaller and the single objects vanished in their respective boxes. I slowly began to see the light.

Star Children and the Big Dipper

Two big projects were waiting to be finished and then the exhibition slowly

manifested itself. The Sumseemann is riding on the Big Dipper, clutching the apple basket, and around them sat the star children. There is Belzebub Irriwitzer's laboratory wall with many little accessories that will beckon my little audience into the wizard's workshop. Jakob and Mauritius, who already know how the story ends, will look mischievously at them.

The Little Prince's Planet

I planned the planet as a little cave in the center of planets made of planet chairs and planet cushions, where children can listen to the prince's stories. Whoever wants to turn into Kim, the small sea troll, can surely imagine how his little friend nuzzles in the dragon's body, tickling his ears. What happens in the Widi Wondel Wood the visitors have to find out for themselves by bringing triangles into life and then go on a journey with Hurleburle. The Mumpel is invisible, but the figures he finds in the world are not, there is so much to discover. Wiggling zig-zag groppers, muffle turtles and more. Maybe the visitors actually find the Mumpel, but not where they think he is.

Lured Into Stories

Whether all this is perfectly felted or meets the highest artistic standards is secondary. I look forward to take the people, small and adult alike, onto literary journeys. At long last, the very hungry caterpillar propels you back to kindergarten, even if this was 50 years ago.

MARGIT RÖHM

Personal information

Margit Röhm is the chair of the Filznetzwerk Association and has been working full time as a felter for 15 years. The felt art show KIBUFI can be seen from August 16th to 30th 2025 in the Filzwelt Soltau. Email: filz@triluna.de
Web site: triluna.de

PAGES 22-23

Heavenly Wool Duvets

The Oberrot Felting School in Oberrot-Neuhausen had organized a two-day workshop titled «Ein Wollduvet (A Wool Duvet)» hosted by the certified felt designer Bärbel Stöppler in October 2024. The aim was to learn how to make an individual duvet.

A duvet filled with sheep wool keeps you snug and warm, because the natural crimping of the sheep hair retain air. This enclosed air is responsible that the body heat is regulated and cold air as well as heat are kept at bay. Under a wool duvet you will hardly sweat or feel cold. Another great feature of sheep hair is that they absorb moisture up to 30 percent of their own weight. A sleeping person gives off moisture, so this feature comes in handy.

The Making of a Wool Duvet

At first the sheath is designed. It consists of bio-cotton percale (a densely woven kind of cotton). It can be either painted on, printed or written on or treated with a stencil. After patterning, a little patience is required, because the colors used have to be fixated with a pressing iron. After that, the duvet is filled with Southern German Merino, in bio- or customary quality. If you own your own flock, use their wool, wash and card it first. The weight differs, depending on whether you want to have a light summer duvet or a warmer one for the winter. The duvets can be made in different sizes. They are machine-sewn together in the end; the quilt points are set manually.

Your Own Duvet

You might ask why a bedspread or comforter is called a wool duvet. It is a word that is used in Switzerland, France and English-speaking countries. In Germany it is uncommon, but in my opinion, it just sounds right for such a beautiful blanket. To make your own blanket is always a unique item and it warms not only the body. The devotion connected with making it, the patience required and the outer design enhance the positive effect. People who already own a wool duvet are always enthusiastic. They say you sleep like under a cloud and the blanket enfolds you like an embrace. During these two relaxing and inspiring days many beautiful duvets have been made, as individual as their makers.

BÄRBEL STÖPPLER

Next Dates

The next wool duvet workshop will take place at the Wollknoll company in Oberrot-Neuhausen from October 30th to 31st 2025.
wollknoll.eu

PAGES 24-25

10 Years felto-Filzwelt Soltau

In the summer of 2015, the «felto – Filzwelt» opened its doors. With the exception of the pandemic, they were wide open on a daily basis for each and every guest. This is going to be celebrated on August 16th and 17th 2025 with a jolly, playful birthday party.

Within the framework of the party, there many colorful and interesting events are scheduled around the subject felt. For instance, there will be a theater project with hand puppets and story-telling. There are open participatory felting events (wet and dry) as well as the installation of a birthday flag chain and a game afternoon in the yard. Look forward to the opening of Margit Röhm's special show «KiBuFi – Kinderbuch trifft Filz (Children's Books Meet Felt)» where scenes from famous children's books are transposed in felt (see our report «Children's Books and Felt»)
∞ Apart from all that, the felto Filzwelt has called on a competition of ideas. They are looking for a felted figure which should serve as a future mascot. All sent-in figures will be presented during the birthday party and the winner chosen (see also page 2).

The felto – Filzwelt History

Already in 2007, the idea came up in Soltau: There was this heritage storage building in the middle of the city that could be used as a mixture of museum and workshop, theatre or cultural center around the theme felt and feltmaking. It is the most ancient way to make fabrics and recalls the one and a half centuries of felt production in Soltau. There is also an important collection of felted toys in the toy museum. Anticipation characterized the show «FilzTräume (Felted Dreams)», during which Sandra Struck-Germann, Thyra Holst, Willi Waljor-Platz and Silke Schneider installed a felted jungle in the

toy museum in 2010. There were many felt fashion shows, where artists from cities like Paris and Dresden came to Soltau. As «Artist in Residence», Martina Breyer made a huge dream planet mobile ~ Since 2015, felto has been the first and only cultural institution in the German speaking area that demonstrates the versatility of felt in a permanent, interactive exhibition. Special shows dealt with artistic two- and three-dimensional facets, such as Söhnke A. Richter's felt paintings, ELMA's great needle felted objects, Christiane Claren's labyrinth carpets, Annette Quentin-Stoll's delicate precision works, «The 7» Oberrot friends and their friendship vessels, Heike Fink's «rolling stones», Annemie Koenen's embroidered felt compositions, the corals made by the Vilt Kontaktgroep and the Finnish-Icelandic felted perspectives regarding the «Disappearing Nature». ~ Since 2017, the Filznetzwerk has been organizing a summer course of lectures in the Soltau Filzwelt. This year, there is a veritable firework of courses. The 10-year anniversary means celebrations and parties, math exhibits, co-operations with local businesses and contacts all over the world. Felt is an integrative material. Accordingly, felto is almost barrier-free and inclusively inclined. We are so happy that the Filzwelt has turned into a true meeting point of work and play for the local people, the many families who have annual tickets, tourists and felt enthusiasts. ~ THANKS to all who contributed to the 10 years of brightly colored feltmaking and who fill our idea with life every day anew.

ANTJE ERNST

Additional Information

The felto Filzwelt is a museum in the city of Soltau in Lower Saxonia. The educational and activity center is devoted to the subject felt on around 1500 square meters. filzwelt-soltau.de

PAGES 28–31

A Symbiosis of Art and Nature

The American-Hungarian textile artist Flóra Carlile-Kovács connects the ancient feltmaking craft to modern art in order to make the fragile yet strong plant symbioses in nature visible. Living organisms, such as lichens, are her inspirational source. Her exhibit in Seattle consisted of three-dimensional art works that were inspired by the coexistence of fungi and algae.

Lichens are fascinating organisms; the mutually beneficial symbiosis of fungi and algae that nurture and protect each other. The algae produce carbohydrates that feed the fungi. The fungi in turn provide protection for the algae while gathering and retaining moisture and nutrients from rain and dust in the atmosphere. Some lichens have an estimated age of about 10.000 years. The shrubby and leafy lichens are the most sensitive to environmental disturbances, and as such they are very accurate bio-indicators of air pollution. This unique connection between fungi and algae inspired Carlile-Kovács to depict a similar harmony in her work. «Rather than simply copying the lichens», she states, «my intention with my textiles was to evoke the sensation that one feels when they see or touch these organisms in the wild. I was interested in representing the natural ambience of the Pacific North West.»

Three-dimensional Structures

She follows two different approaches to represent various species of lichens. For the leafy-shrubby ones, she uses a plethora of hand-dyed silk fabrics, arranged in tiny pleats to provide depth of the rich texture, allowing the light to play with the shadows. Silk fibers make for a gentle texture and the shine of crust-like lichens. The artist sculpts those organic shapes by using some principles of differential shrinkage. Her objects captivate through their three-dimensional structures which emulate the slow growing process and the finely interwoven textures. «The more I worked on my lichen project the more parallels I found between lichens and my hand-made felt», the artists states. Just as algae and fungi support each other to emerge as a new, inseparable organism, in her work the silk fibers, silk fabrics and wool fibers are merged by the ancient

felting craft, to form organically shaped structural elements. The wool fibers «catch» the silk and form a strong base for the silk fabrics. The shrinking process renders the silk provides beautiful, rich textures, color and luster.

Textile Innovation Through Feltmaking

Feltmaking is one of the most ancient textile crafts in the world. In Carlile-Kovács' hands, it becomes a medium of modern art. «Feltmaking is a combination of painting and sculpturing», she says. «The different layers of silk and wool fibers result in optical color mixes and make for a unique play of light and shadow.» She developed a technique where pleated and hand-dyed silk strips are felted in a merino wool base. «The rhythm, the frequency and the varied size pleats create a three-dimensional, abstract, almost pixelated image for the distant viewer.»

Nature Meets Interior Architecture

The artist sees not only an artistic, but also functional additional value. «Modern office spaces with their glass, metal and concrete can seem cold and clinical», she says. «With my textiles, I bring back the organic softness of nature into these spaces». Felt is not only aesthetically pleasing but it absorbs sound, regulates the indoor temperature and filters noxious substances from the air. Carlile-Kovács' mission is to break the boundary between art and fine crafts. «Felt is an underestimated and underrepresented medium in the art world», she emphasizes. «I want to show how various and up to date it can be, and I would like to bring felt back to modern living spaces and interior designs.»

Her Artistic Path

For years, she has been experimenting with felting techniques and continues to expand their possibilities. «Feltmaking is a spontaneous, almost instinctive process», she describes her work. «You start with a veritable fiber chaos and then create order. The textures, shapes and effects that can be achieved by inserting materials like other textiles, organic materials, wire and metal threads, beads or stones are practically unlimited. Felt is a natural insulation for sound and temperature, it is fire- and UV-resistant, hypoallergenic and economically sustainable. Felt absorbs damaging particles from the air and is easy to clean.»

Exhibition in Seattle

Her lichen project was supported by the city of Seattle and presented within the scope of an exhibition. In the Labour Temple in the inner city of Seattle, the artist showed her exhibit named «Feltsapes: Lichens» – a world full of organic forms, soft textures and earthy colors. This show was an important milestone in her artistic development. «I hope that my work can inspire people to perceive nature on a more conscious level and to integrate it in their daily lives», so the artist's intention.

DIANA PYTER

Flóra Carlile-Kovács

Flóra Carlile-Kovács was born in Szeged, Hungary, and now she lives and works in Seattle in the Pacific North West of the US. She hosts workshops on a regular basis and leads Felt Tours to Hungary. florafelts.com
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PAGES 32-35

Playing with Unpredictability

The Austrian Constanze Habringer-Krög blurs the boundaries between clothing and art. Her seamless clothes that she dyes herself with rust, eco print or plant dyes in a natural way combine aesthetics and functionality.

Constanze Habringer-Krög's journey into the world of feltmaking began with a deep passion for wool, its materiality, haptics and malleability 30 years ago. «Already early on I was fascinated by the diverse techniques, the structures achieved and how they are made», the 52-year-old feltmaker from the Austrian Salzkammergut, who has four grown sons, tells us. Together with her husband, she lives in Zell am Moos near the Irr lake. «The first time I encountered a hand-made felt, I admired the connection of loose fibers that turned into a piece of fabric through the use of hands only.» In the beginning, the Montessori teacher experimented with wool of different local sheep breeds as well as with naturally or chemically dyed sheep wool. «Later I

discovered the possibilities of soft merino wool and I was impressed how thin and delicate the felts turn out», she says. She then focused mainly on three-dimensional feltmaking and ended up with making seamless clothing – a form of art that blurs the boundaries between clothing and art.

Aesthetics and Functionality

The felting-in of natural materials such as silk, flax, raw wool or coco was added in order to achieve new textures. «I was much taken with how the wool changed under my hands and structured individually. Common techniques did not reach this end», she tells us. Her art became a connection between aesthetics and functionality. At this point in time, she started to develop an interest in natural dyeing, for example with rust, eco print and plant materials. «Each finished piece is the result of a journey, from the first glimpse of an idea to its final realization and so to speak, a return to nature. Plant dyes are a wonderful means to work with, natural hues that are not only pleasing to the eye but also tell a story», the felt artist claims. To dye with rust has a personal meaning for her. Her grandfather was a blacksmith and her father a locksmith by trade. «Iron that leaves a trace on textiles was a fascinating thing – a reminder of bygone days, a connection with history, stories and remembrances», she remembers. ♡ The rough industrial quality is a contrast to the delicate and thinly felted cloths and coats. The coloring is simultaneously arbitrary and under control, since the oxidation process can be steered with purposeful techniques. «It is playing with the unpredictability of nature that enriches my work with its unique colors. I wanted to create a connection which puts the wearer into a dialogue with the environment», says Constanze Habringer-Krög.

Relaxing During Felting Courses

The artist's studio lies in a picturesque landscape at the Irr Lake in the Austrian Salzkammergut. Mostly you will find her tending her garden. She plants and harvests some of her plant dyes and finds relaxation there. In her studio, she teaches workshops for different dyeing and felting techniques. «In a world that is full of stress and hustle handicraft courses offer a possibility to slow down, to enjoy the moment and to concentrate on creative processes», she claims. She sells her work often at artisan fairs or handicraft exhibits and markets. She also

works on order. In a time where conscious consumerism is asked for, the artist enjoys the possibility to think fashion and art anew and to simultaneously strengthen the connection with nature.

LARA PYTER

Constanze Habringer-Krög

More information about Constanze Habringer-Krög, course schedules and exhibition dates please find at [@panweb.at/filz](http://panweb.at/filz)
[@constanzekroeg](https://www.instagram.com/constanzekroeg)

PAGES 36-41

Tutorial: Small Summer Bag

This small summer bag makes for pure summer feelings and is the ideal companion for a leisurely shopping trip or relaxed hours at the beach or in the beer garden. It has enough room for all your necessary things. Its flower pattern brings a summer breeze in your daily routine.

Material:

- ♡ Merino roving (white, approx. 50 g, light turquoise approx. 40 g)
- ♡ Needle fleece in turquoise, green, orange
- ♡ Silk fibers for decorations
- ♡ Sound insulation foil for the resist
- ♡ Skidproof mat
- ♡ Ball sprinkler
- ♡ Flyscreen
- ♡ Water
- ♡ Olive soap
- ♡ Towel
- ♡ A pair of sharp scissors, a felting needle if handy

Instructions:

- 1 First cut the resist out of the sound insulation foil.

Bag String

- 2 Divide the white roving into three parts. Roll a piece of approx. 200 cm up dry on the skidproof mat and moisten it with water (leave approx. 10 cm at one end dry).

- 3 Roll it cautiously with soapy hands to form a round string.

4 Lay very thin wool strands in a 190 cm long row next to each other and put the string onto the edge (image-05).

5 Roll the workpiece up with care.

6 Moisten it again and felt it with soapy hands until the fibers connect perfectly. If you want, you can put on some colored fibers before the moistening. The end remains dry.

Flower Pattern

7 Depending on its thickness, lay out the needle fleece doubly and felt it slightly with the needle. Cut out blossoms and petals out, without stencils, just to your liking.

8 Additionally, cut out circle (diameter approx. 12 cm) for the decorative blossom to be fastened at the bag's string.

Bag

9 Put two thin layers of white roving across from each other (one layer vertically and one horizontally) on the resist and let the wool fibers stick out about two to three centimeters.

10 Cover it with flyscreen, moisten it with water, press the air out and rub slightly with soapy hands.

11 Remove the flyscreen with care, turn the resist over and fold the sticking out wool closely around the resist's edge.

12 Now lay out the other side identically.

Fastening the String

13 Pick some fibers out from the dry end of the string, fan them out and put them around the right edge of the resist at a distance of 25 cm seen from the lower edge.

14 Rub slightly.

15 Then put two thin, light turquoise wool layers again across from each other and felt them well, especially at the area where string and bag connect.

Laying Out the Blossom Pattern and Felting

16 Place the middle of the blossoms.

17 Distribute the petals around in a circle, but not too close since the

pattern will shrink during the felting process.

18 Cover it with the flyscreen and felt thoroughly. Then remove the flyscreen.

19 Turn around the bag.

20 Lay out the pattern on the backside as described above and felt it.

21 Now spray the bag with hot water, roll it up in the skidproof mat and roll in from all sides and in all directions. In between check and correct the shape. As soon as shrinkage occurs, remove the resist.

Cutting the Bag Open

22 Flap the bag down to where the string begins.

23 Mark the height and cut an opening along the mark and around the inner edge of the flap. Put the cut-out piece aside. Remove the resist, smooth eventual bulges and firmly felt the cutting edges as well as the entire bag inside and outside. Tug into shape repeatedly.

Fulling

24 Spray the bag anew with hot water, roll it up into the skidproof mat and full from all sides and in all directions, until the bag is sturdy. Check and correct the shape. Cut a small opening for the string on one side, approx. 2 cm below the upper edge. Felt the cutting edges.

Decorative Blossom

25 Cover the pre-felt with silk fibers.

26 Put on the flyscreen, water and felt it with soapy hands.

27 Shape the circle into a cone and cut a small hole in the middle.

Finishing

28 Rinse all parts thoroughly and put them in vinegar water afterwards. Press the liquid out and pull into shape. Pull the string from the inside to the outside through the bag opening, thread the decorative blossom up and fix it with a knot. The length of the string may vary as per your liking.

Optional:

The piece that was cut away from the bag flap can be fulled separately, dried and sewed on as a small inside pocket. Further decorate it with beads or embroidering.

INSTRUCTIONS: SILVA JOSTEN

Silvia Josten

Since 2002, Silvia Josten has been a committed felt artist. She interprets this traditional craft in a fresh and modern way. In 2007, she founded her own label «Filzperle» and enhances her skills during workshops by well-known national and international felt artists. 2024 Silvia Josten finished the felting quality exam and became a member of the Filznetzwerk in 2025. Her specialties are wet-felting, nuno felting and embroidery. With fine Merino, silk and a combination of wool and paper she creates new and fascinating textures. Her focus is on making felted jewelry, sculptures and high-class embroidery on wool felt. High quality standards and lightness are especially dear to her. Wool for her is a veritable wonder and a continual source of inspiration.

filzperle.de

@filzperle

shop.filzperle.de

PAGES 42–45

To Fight for One's Own Values With Felt Art

The French artist Pierre-Yves Delannoy wants to tell stories with his felt art – amongst others from his experiences as a queer person. In the past three years and during his studies at the Academy of Fine Arts in Munich he made and presented big format paintings, tapestries, costumes or 3-D objects like chairs in many exhibitions.

Pierre-Yves' artistic trip in the realm of feltmaking began three years ago in Belgium. During a textile event, his eye caught a piece of felt on concrete that looked like a pig's hide. «Inspired by the lecturer in the textile department in Gent, I set out to learn the craft by myself via YouTube videos and began to felt costume parts in my room», he remembers his first experiments. After the 25-year-old artist graduated in 2019 at the École Nationale

Supérieure d'Architecture de Versailles (France) with a master in architecture, he studied Free Art at the Akademie der Bildenden Künste (Academy of Fine Arts) in Munich and received his diploma there. His final assignment also dealt with the subject felt. He especially likes the physical aspect. «The movements remind me of kneading dough», he says. «The technique alone already is magical, because the fibers connect without glue or else and merge into an entity.» The unpredictability of the material is another challenge – felt and feltmaking are always surprising and certainly have their inherent dynamics. He is impressed by this ancient tradition, and regarding his art, he values the fact that he can work in big sizes. The latter are subject to many video installations that he creates together with his living partner Mauricio Hölzemann or with groups of other felters.

Textiles and Materials

His favorite technique is wet-felting with Marseille soap on big surfaces which he used to roll in the garden of the Munich Academy, while he was still there. Additionally, he employs needle techniques for details and «felt mice», little felted balls, for smaller surfaces. «Next to felt I work with embroidery on paper and felt, I crochet with cotton yarn and I experiment with silk-screen printing on fabrics. I also work in performances and video projects», Delannoy states. Until recently, he had mainly felted in the Academy's premises. As of summer 2025, however, he will move into his own studio in the Domagk Complex in Munich. His art is everything to him, so he plans his creative work around his other jobs in an architect's office and as a bike courier. «I had never thought that felting would take up so much room in my life. It feels like a chance encounter had resulted in a trusted relationship. And precisely this relationship is crucial to my life», the artist tells us.

Felt Art and Inspiration

Delannoy's work comprises a wide range of felted objects – from small costume parts, chairs to embroidered felted images. The themes often bear a vicinity to his being a queer person and homosexuality. His sources of inspiration are his own life experiences in perspective of a marked social and political trajectory. Each object has been made with a thoughtful diligence and love for detail and has always been

subject to committed research. He starts his creative process digitally, whereby he designs models and drawings at the computer before he transposes his ideas onto felt. He uses different kinds of wool in natural colors, but also dyed merino wool. «I buy the wool already washed and dyed and carded. But I work on getting into a closer relationship with shepherds and shepherdesses.»

Art Can be Political

It is his dearest wish to dedicate himself wholly to art and to be able to make a living from it. For him, art is a political means that may raise certain subjects that are suppressed by society. «The intimate is political, as are our hands», he says. Handicraft in his eyes is a symbol for queer, feminist and resistant practice and protest. «The lives of LGBTQ+ persons are threatened by laws, violence or social structures and we experience discrimination everyday», he complains. His aim is to foster a deeper argument with those underlying social drifts and to let his objects speak for the things he values and to render them visible. «Many people think that art cannot be political, but I believe it to be the opposite. Many things threaten our system», says Pierre-Yves Delannoy. «This is why our personal life or our intimacy is political indeed, because it doesn't happen independently from society. But I have a chance to express that freely and I will put it to best use.»

DIANA PYTER

Pierre-Yves Delannoy

The French felt artist Pierre-Yves Delannoy from the Champagne regularly shows his object at various exhibitions. Further information about him please find on his website or on Instagram. pierre-yvesdelannoy.com [@pi_lannoy](https://www.instagram.com/pi_lannoy)

PAGES 46–47

Of Elves and Funny-Faced Creatures

Everything got started three years ago with bewitching elfin figures, when Heike Böhn taught herself feltmaking with the help of videos and workshops on the internet. By now, she has become more courageous and makes projects of a larger size.

«When I first held a felting needle in my hand I felt great respect. As time went along and after many experiments, I found out that this is exactly my preferred material; it makes me happy», Heike Böhn describes the beginning of her great passion. Before, she used to admire the various forms of felt art she saw at art and crafts markets. «Felt is a beautiful material that exists in so many different colors and forms. The range of what can be made out of it still surprises me», says Heike Böhn.

☞ In the early days she made elves, much to the joy of her circle of friends. «Over time, my objects became more beautiful and I tried my hands on bigger figures», she describes her artistic development. She is especially fascinated by how she can sculpture the felting wool with a felting needle until she is happy with the result. «When I felt figures, I take care that their faces bear a funny expression. The best moment is when I felt eyes – they always make me smile», she tells us.

Feltmaking as a Meditation

In due course, she gave in to the attraction of wet-felting. «In the meantime I wet-felt the most diverse things, such as storm lamps for each season, small bags or little baskets and flower chains. I often use the fulling pin», the felt artist describes her ways of working. At her small but cozy working place in the living room she needle-felts, for wet-felting she chooses the kitchen. «I felt in my spare time and enjoy to forget everything around me, together with a cup of my favorite tea brand. This handicraft is very relaxing, almost meditative.» Her life has changed considerably through her artistic talent. «My perception of beauty has intensified and I enjoy every single moment whenever I can make something nice out of felting wool», she says happily.

☞ Heike Böhn mostly works with Merino roving and Merino fleece, but also with viscose. «The viscose wool is used for the hairdos of my creatures because it has a

nice sheen», she says. Depending on her workpiece she also uses the embroidery needle and accentuates it with small Rocailles beads. The annual seasons are her sources of inspiration. Spring and fall with their radiant colors are her favorite subjects.

☞ Apart from feltmaking, she spends many hours in her garden. In summer, she wet-felts there. «I love to take long walks with my dog and I always find little things I can use in my objects, like small branches, moss, snail shells, small pieces of woods or dried flower heads», she enumerates. «Felting has taught me a love for detail.» In the future, she would like to learn more during workshops to enhance her skills in the countless opportunities feltmaking offers.

DIANA PYTER

Heike Böhn

Find more inspirations around felting with the seasons at Heike Böhn's Instagram account
[@heikes_buntesbuedchen](#)

PAGES 48–50

Tutorial: A cuddly worrywart

This cuddly worrywart made by Katrin Bigl is perfectly suited to keep slips of paper containing your worries or small treasures.

Materials

- ☞ 30 – 35 g wool fleece, ideally mountain or stone sheep wool but merino fleece is fine, too
- ☞ Wool dyed in other colors, either as fleece or roving for the coloring and for hair, if desired
- ☞ Colored yarn in amounts desired
- ☞ Skidproof mat
- ☞ Warm water
- ☞ Good soap
- ☞ Bubble foil for the resist
- ☞ Buttons/beads for eyes, sewing yarn, needle
- ☞ A pair of sharp scissors

Instructions:

1 For such a troll or worrywart with a final height of approx. 15 cm you need a resist in drop form 25 cm high and about

17 – 18 cm wide. Bubble foil is ideal but sound insulation foil will do as well.

2A Lay out the mountain sheep wool fleece first in horizontal, then in vertical direction.

2B After that put on the dyed wool and/or other materials so that the troll gains a personality. In our example, the hair consists of linen fibers and for the shift a net from a fruit package.

2C Soap the workpiece and moisten it with lukewarm water.

3 Now flatten it cautiously – maybe use gauze or a piece of foil to do so – and turn it around.

4 Fold the wool that sticks out from the edges over exactly at the edge of the foil. Continue to lay out mountain sheep wool onto the still free middle part, also in two layers.

5 In order to decorate the backside, put on other small pieces of different materials or differently colored wool.

6 Now soap the workpiece, moisten and flatten it and turn it around once more. Still protruding fibers should be folded over again. Then the actual feltmaking starts. It is best to start with the edges to stabilize the object and to lessen the danger of the wool is shifting. Once the edges are firm, felt the middle part. Turn everything around again and repeat those steps on the backside.

7 When both sides are firmly felted, fulling may start. Take care to full in such a way that the figure, that is still two-dimensional, becomes three-dimensional.

8 To this end, it helps to pull the flat sides apart a bit and roll them over the edges.

9 Once the troll is sufficiently full, so it is three-dimensional and sturdy, cut a mouth opening with a pair of sharp scissors. Felt the mouth a bit in order to close the cutting edges.

10 Rinse the worrywart, first in clear water and then in vinegar water. Tumble the troll dry and shape it again properly. Now sew on the beads for eyes and make a hairdo. After the troll is dry you can

feed him with written-down worries or small treasures. (Image 10 a and 10 b)

INSTRUCTIONS: KATRIN BIGL

Katrin Bigl

For Katrin Bigl, feltmaking is often an expression for coming to terms with emotional stresses. Things that touch her she expresses in her work. She sells her felted objects in her cozy studio and keeps offering felting courses.

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PAGES 51–53

Small Details to Great Effect

Delicate elements such as felted nuggets, beads, buttons or small particles of silk cocoons offer a simple yet elegant possibility to design felted surfaces. The felt artist Ina Birke allows for a glance over her shoulder.

There are tons of different kinds to design the surface of felted objects. I personally prefer the resist, slab or block technique. You can imitate the texture of bark or those traces that form on a beach when the sands are awash with water. The inserting of folds in surfaces I particularly like and how those can be processed further to create new structures and design possibilities. With some feltmaking experience, we can let things grow high on the surface and we can decorate our felted objects with little flowers, lappets, bubbles or tubes that look like anemones. The felting-in of nuggets is another element enhancing surfaces. It is easily done and offers fantastic possibilities for experimenting.

The Merging of Fibers and Objects

To lastingly fix the objects onto the surface we use silk fabrics, such as chiffon, Margilan or Pongé, but cotton gauze and cheese cloth can look really nice as well. The fabrics and the wool fibers merge at the edges of our objects and connect to the felted piece. The result is a fine coloring and a strong definition of pattern that make for wonderful textures.

Valuable advice:

Silk gauze (Chiffon or Margilan) tends to almost vanish into the felted surface. It serves to cover the embedded objects and to keep them in place. They remain visible. But these embedded objects have to weigh little, since the thin silk gauze can only carry a slight weight. Use shining, colorful things. Take your time and work slowly. This meticulous work at the beginning will help that the fabrics lie firm around the embedded objects.

Tutorial for a Felted Surface Design with Nuggets, Beads and Buttons

Materials

- ~ 10 g dyed Merino, separated into two layers of 5 g each
- ~ 25 cm square of silk gauze, chiffon or Margilan silk

Suitable objects for inserting:

- ~ Small glass beads, e.g. Rocailles
- ~ Sequins Halved felt pearls, felted cords
- ~ Felted Nuggets
- ~ Small pieces of a silk cocoon

Instructions

1 Lay out the wool evenly in a first layer (5 g) on a square of 25 x 25 cm in vertical fiber direction. This square is then covered with wool for the second layer (5 g) in horizontal direction. Flatten the dry workpiece down with your hands with care.

2 Moisten the workpiece as you see fit and cover it with bubble foil (the even side is turned up). Press it down to smooth the wool fibers. It is much easier to lay out the decorating elements and to position them if the base layer is already wet and flat.

3 Take the bubble foil off cautiously and put on the decorating elements. Smaller ones can be laid out arbitrarily and in any distance from each other. If you use bigger items such as felt nuggets or buttons they should be positioned at a distance of at least 1.5 cm. The space between the parts shrinks during felting, keep that in mind.

4 Now the piece of silk is put carefully and as flat as possible onto the woolen surface. Cover it with bubble foil

(even part up) and flatten it. Put some soapy water onto the foil so the hands glide easier across. You might want a good contact between the silk fabric and the fibers of the base layer. Press the workpiece together a bit and rub carefully. Then felt as before.

5 Don't forget to work on the edges during felting and fulling. After each roll the edges and design elements should be checked and reshaped, if needed. Continue the felting process until the shrinkage and overall quality is to your liking.

6 Rinse it well and tumble it or press the moisture out with a towel. For drying lay the workpiece out flat.

INSTRUCTIONS: INA BIRKE

Ina Birke

For 20 years Ina Birke has been a freelancer with her studio/workshop «filzgewandt» and podcasts together with her feltmaking colleague Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke with «Volle Brause», every second Thursday a month. filzgewandt.de
filz-podcast.de
[@atelierwerkstatt_filzgewandt](https://www.instagram.com/atelierwerkstatt_filzgewandt)

PAGES 54-55

Felting Life as It Is

In Liubov Maier's repertory there are no perfect models but figures from real life – wrinkled, potbellied or toothless. The 25-year-old felter loves best to depict grandmothers and grandfathers – as an homage to her granny who passed away too early.

Liubov Maier's childhood was characterized by creativity. Her mother ardently supported her talents in painting, crocheting and knitting. These early handicrafts were not only handled playfully but they opened a realm for her – the world of colors and shapes that accompanies her to this day. Each brush stroke and each loop tell the story of a girl that experiences the beauty of making something of her very own. «These experiences not only gave me the required skills, but also the self-confidence to move on my artistic path.»

Grannies and Granddads of Character

«I learned about feltmaking on the internet and soon I wanted to try it for myself», the young feltmaker tells us. For the last four years, she has been exclusively dedicating herself to her art under her own label «Minifilzwelt (Miniature Felting World)». «Wool is my preferred material for I can convey all my ideas with it. I have found myself completely in that material», says Maier. She works mostly in the needle-felting technique, but always by hand and no machines. She makes her objects in her own studio in the attic of her house in Remscheid. Mountain sheep wool is what she mostly uses. «I love felting old folks, showing life as it is, with wrinkles, potbellies or missing teeth. I make figures that appeal to almost anybody», the young felter tells us. Grannies and Granddads are central figures for her, owing to the close relationship to her own grandmother who passed away untimely early. What is left of her are fleeting memories that her grandchild tries to hold firm.

Displaying Emotions

Everything starts with an idea. «I know exactly what I want as a result, but I always keep in mind the changes that may occur during the process», the felt artist states. She wants to depict real life, people and animals with their emotions and character traits. «By facial expressions and glances, you can tell a lot, but I always leave room for my clients' own imagination. They can spin the tale further, e.g. why the granny is sitting right there and what might be on her mind.» She sews the dresses for her figures herself and decorates them with beads to accentuate certain parts. ~ Her range of work not only comprises grannies and grandpas with a lot of character, but also three-dimensional images and animals, which she shows on art and craft fairs, at exhibitions and on social media. «I am very happy that my pastime turned into a profession. I do what I love and I love what I'm doing – this is my philosophy of life», states the artist, who dreams of owning a little house at the seaside in Spain or Portugal.

LARA PYTER

Liubov Maier

Liubov Maier shows her felt art on arts and crafts markets as well as on the internet on her website and on Instagram. minifilzwelt.de
[@minifilzwelt](https://www.instagram.com/minifilzwelt)

«Filz vom Wolf»

For more than 30 years, Ursula Wolf has been cultivating a lovingly restored self-catering farm together with her family. Embedded between the Fichtel Mountains and the Stone Forest, in Kulmain in the Upper Palatine, this farm is not only a home for sheep but also the germ cell of a project called «Filz vom Wolf (Felt from Wolf)».

Together with her daughter Magdalena, Ursula has created a world in which sheep keeping, wool processing and educational programs merge and sustainable handicraft subsists. Thirty years ago, Ursula Wolf who is 55 and the mother of three daughters, decided to live on the old farm, which was badly in need of repair, and to keep sheep. «The Coburg fox sheep, a sturdy and regional breed, became a part of our family», Ursula Wolf tells us. At times, there were up to 20 sheep with lambs living on the farm. The did not only provide high quality wool but contribute to the preservation of the countryside with their grazing. Their keeping follows a sustainable cycle: The sheep preserve the pastures, provide natural fertilizer and are the focus of our visitors' learning. The sheep are Ursula Wolf's daily companions. «I keep them fed and watered, I secure their pastures and take care of their claws, the shearing and lambing», the shepherdess tells us with great enthusiasm. The farm is also a home for chickens, ducks, bees, cats and a shepherd dog. She is supported by her husband Norbert, when his full-day job allows it. Another big help is her daughter Magdalena who became a mother herself last year. The whole family highly values the contact with animals – that the sheep pen is around the corner is not only a practical feature, but also emotionally important.

From Sheep to Felted Product

27 years ago, Ursula Wolf discovered her love of the felting craft, when so much wool accumulated and she was on the lookout how to put it to good use. What initially began as a creative pastime quickly turned out to be a lasting commitment. Today, items of everyday use, like hats, shoes, cushions, bench mats, bags and jewelry are made under her label «Filz vom Wolf». «The wool is always locally procured and is processed in its natural state», so Ursula Wolf. Since the demand is greater than the wool of

her flock allows, Ursula and Magdalena cooperate with local sheep keepers and a big sheep farm in the Altmühl valley. Each source is thoroughly checked in order to guarantee a sustainable and species-appropriate sheep keeping. ~ The wool of her own flock is mainly processed by herself. After the annual shearing, the wool is sorted out. Dirty wool is used to mulch the garden. Clean fleeces are processed directly or sent to Haslach in Austria for cleaning and carding. One part of the wool is turned into bed ware and carpets that will later be sold in her own studio store.

A Farm for Experience and Learning

Next to the production of felted objects, «Filz vom Wolf» has established an educational program. Magdalena Wolf contributes her experiences as a kindergarten teacher and plans guided tours and workshop for students, kindergartens, kids' birthday parties and mother and child-groups. «During these workshops, the participants not only learn about sheep keeping and the processing of wool, but they can try their hand at felting», Magdalene Wolf reports. They also host workshop for advanced felters on a regular basis with the aim to promote this ancient handicraft. The connection of sheep and felt art also echoes in the farm's architecture – the studio is directly above the sheep pen. There is a window on the floor, visitors and students can have a look at the sheep while they felt together. The source of the fun is always in plain view!

Sustainability as a Life Philosophy

The Wolfs' family life is characterized by a deep respect for nature and crafts. Their goal is to strengthen the importance of local sheep wool and to raise attention to the drawbacks of industrial wool processing. «Filz vom Wolf» stands for sustainable production, transparent chains of economic value and the closeness of human beings, animals and nature. Next to the felting business, the farm is entirely self-sufficient. The growing of vegetables, wood economy and animal keeping is exclusively meant for domestic use and each feature follows the principle of recycling economy. The sheep play a crucial role – not only because they provide wool but as part of an ecological balance.

Looking Into the Future

For Ursula and Magdalena Wolf, «Filz vom Wolf» is not only a profession but

a life task. They want to develop their work with wool further into and to inspire the public for this special material. The farm should be a meeting place where handicraft, nature and communal feeling exists in harmony. Their vision is to raise awareness for local wool and to produce sustainable felted items. With each hat, cushion or guided tour around the farm, they bring home their message: Appreciation for the craft, responsibility towards nature and the joy of dealing with one of the most ancient fabrics made by mankind.

LARA PYTER

More Information

There are lots of events happening on the farm, such as felt courses, guided farm tours or outings for the whole family: filzvomwolf.de

Kurdish Felt Carpets

Mari Nagy and István Vidák follow the traces of Kurdish carpets during their trip to Persia and report on their history, the traditional making and the different patterns.

Mari Nagy und István Vidák got to know the architect Kati Faled in Marivan during their trip to Persia. The city of Marivan lies in the Kermanshah region that is mainly populated by Kurds. «My relatives live in the Horaman valley and I have three free days at my disposal. We could explore the small villages in that beautiful valley and visit the masters there. There will still be snow on the mountains, but the pomegranate trees will be in blossom. Let's start right after lunch!», our new friend said and we accepted his generous proposal.

A Visit to the Felting Master Ali Amini

In the village of Kamala, we got to know Ali Amini and his family. He is the most excellent felt carpet maker in this region. At his workshop we saw his tools. The local word for the reed mat is «Galeb» and their sizes are mostly 2 x 3 or 2 x 5 m. The reeds can be substituted by a strong cotton fabric (Guni). The wool is measured per unit, called «Man» that

corresponds to approx. 3 kg. To loosen the wool, he uses a bow (Tschu kaman) that comes with a beating wood (Tschak) and a linen ring (Girbal).

Distributing the Wool

Usually, he starts with loosening the wool twice, so it retains more air. The loose wool is then spread onto the reed mat. For laying out, it he uses a fork (San), a wooden tool with a handle. With this, he spreads the wool evenly thick. Around a fulling rod that serves as a core, the felt piece is rolled up and then felted. The next step is the use of a crooked cane (Gutschan) to righten the edges during the fulling process. At the beginning of fulling, a pair of scissors (Gejtschi) comes into play to cut straight edges. The half-finished pattern is cut out of pre-felt. The pattern color is mostly natural brown or black. The felted wool is moistened with a metal watering pot. Für the last rolling he uses a rope called «Tanáb».

Felting

The way to work corresponds to the methods formerly used in Turkey, i.e. without a fulling machine. The pattern is laid out onto the reed mat, then covered thickly with wool and moistened. The whole workpiece is rolled around a rod, carefully tied up carefully and then kicked by his feet over several meters, rolling forward. Then the package is turned around and rolled backward. If, after several rounds of treatment, the carpet is sturdy, the package is opened, washed with clear water and then hung in the sun to dry. The payment is calculated by how many units «Man» were used.

∞ In the Horama valley, the rooms are mostly laid out with felted carpets, which makes Master Ali and his colleagues much sought-after artisans.

The Pattern

The blankets almost always have a white base and the pattern is of dark, brown or black sheep wool. At first, a thin pre-felt

is made out of which the pattern is cut out. An often-encountered pattern is the Wolf's tooth or zig-zag line that normally frames the middle pattern. Inside the pattern, there are triangles and squares which make for the so-called eyes. The pre-felt is cut in a zigzag line or in strips in order not to waste material. The surface covered by the pattern stretches along half the carpet. The felted carpets are relatively thick, so they keep off the cold and their size are rather longish.

Where Did We See the Felted Carpets

Of course, also in Ali Amin's home the family members sit or sleep on such carpets and blankets. Travelers who visit the Horaman valley in summer find those blankets especially interesting. In the city of Szanadédzs, in a former palace, we visited a museum that deals with the history of the region. One photograph depicts a classroom, where the teacher and the students sit on patterned felt carpets.

Cave Dwellings

In the Kermanshah region, there are dwellings that were dug into the soft stone of the Zagros mountains. This cave system is today a part of the world's cultural heritage. One of the more famous villages is Mejmand. An acquaintance, Miklós Sárközi, travelled extensively in this part of the country and he allowed us to use some of his photographs for this article.

Iraqi Kurds' Feltmaking

The western part of the Kermanshah Mountains borders on Iraq. A part of the Kurdish people was forcibly displaced to the other side of the border, but they still stick to their old traditions. In the city of Erbil is the Kurdish textile museum with a rich collection. In the exhibition hall, eight to ten felt carpets are on display. The patterns and coloring of those are much richer in comparison with those

of the Iranian Horaman valley. Next to natural basic colors, you find beige, black and red. We did not visit this region, but on the museum's website we saw the photograph shown here. The patterns, however, resemble those used in the Horaman valley. But the variants are more resourceful – you can find red, orange, blue and yellow. Their carpets are much wider and some have red or black fringes. In the permanent exhibit, you can see felted carpets that are only a few years old.

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