

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #90, Spring 2026

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Dear readers,

Spring is the season of awakenings, of new bonds and keen senses. In this *filzfun* issue one thought is central throughout all the contributions: Being connected. We meet the blind textile artist Sugandha Gupta from New York who can't see felt, but she feels and understands it with other senses than eyesight. (p. 22 ff.) Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke has found her very own way in creating objects that convince through their simplicity, durability and uniqueness. (as of p. 42). For Daniela Balducci from Italy, felting is forever connected with sustainability (as of p. 26), while the British felt artist Kathy Hoath found her inner peace in this craft (as of p. 34). Annemie Koenen's work goes straight to the heart (as of p. 50), she makes personal life rugs for the last journey. Film maker and director Walter Aigner bridges handicrafts, animals and people in his film «Die Wolle, der Mensch, das Schaf» (as of p.52) With the US artist Laura Gutzwiller we learn about the felt imagery technique and marvel at her colorful, poetic felted landscapes (p. 46 ff). Teaching her skills is essential for Yasmin Groß-Stellmach, who lives on a farm with her own flock. She wants to deepen people's

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.

knowledge of animals and nature (p.56 ff) International felters met in Izmir, Mari Nagy and István Vidák report on the event (as of p. 60) We provide a glimpse to the Filzkolleg 2026. And last but not least you will find two inspiring tutorials: a fairyhouse bag (p.30) and a felted «painting» showing a Hawaiian sunset. We wish you a lot of fun!

Price Adaptation *filzfun*

During the past couple of years, we maintained a stable pricing of the *filzfun* in spite of the challenging economic developments. Now we face rising cost especially in terms of logistics and shipping. To be able to offer the *filzfun* according to our standards of quality and expert knowledge, inspiration and love for detail, a moderate rise of the price is required. As of issue 2/2026, the subscription price is 36.90 € in Germany (49.90 € abroad) and the kiosk price 9.99 € in Germany (12.,00 € in Austria and Luxembourg, 13,00 € in Slovakia). We are grateful for your understanding and your support that will make it possible to plan, write and design the *filzfun* with continuing dedication to the felting craft in the future as well.

Our best,
Your *filzfun* Team

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de

The summer issue will be published on May 30th, 2026
Editorial deadline: March 5th, 2026

Creative Mindset at the Creativa Fair

From March 25th to 29th 2026, the Messe Dortmund will be a meeting point again for all who crave DIY, handicraft and creative design: the CREATIVA, Europe's biggest creative fair invites you to discover new things, to learn and to try in connection with current DIY trends, many workshops and activity grounds full of inspiration. Focal points this year are the theme worlds «Garten & Floristik (Garden & Florists)» as well as «Creative Mindset». Those who wish to become familiar with new techniques and materials, or want to shop or simply to get new ideas should keep the date in mind by all means. Admission and further infos on the organizers' web page.

messe-creativa.de

TEXIMUS 5 – Textile Art in Focus

For the fifth time, the great textile art exhibit TEXIMUS will take place in the Old Town Hall of Zug in Switzerland from March 5th to 22nd 2026. When the Triennial 2014 started, textiles didn't yet meet artistic evaluation. This has changed and textile art is found everywhere. The work is juried in terms of warranted quality standards. 161 objects were handed in, 46 were chosen. This high number of exhibits offers a representative overview of textile art in Switzerland. Other than many other textile art exhibits, TEXIMUS shows works across all generations, which enhances its expressive value. Textiles tell stories that appeal to people. They can be touched and sensually appreciated. Even a simple textile surface is three-dimensional – the direct opposite of the flat screen that determines our lives these days. Thread for thread, loop for loop, stitch for stitch and their regular rhythmic application call for the same movements. This repetitive motion is deeply textile. Prerequisites are patience, enduring power and silence – luxury items of our times.

Opening:
18. März 2025, 6 p.m. – 9 p.m.
tafch.ch

Mode sammeln: Collecting Fashion: From T-Shirts to Haute Couture

Evening gowns, streetwear, lingerie or men's suits – die exhibition «Mode sammeln (Collecting Fashion)» that takes place in the textile museum in St. Gallen, Switzerland until May 25th 2026 deals with the question of collecting clothes and asks questions like: what makes a textile object worth collecting? It sheds light on possessions, responsibility and surplus goods and shows pieces from the textile museum St. Gallen and items from four different private collections. Exclusive T-shirts echoing pop culture and graphic designs, ravishing lingerie mirroring images of female beauty, tailored haute couture dresses and the elegant men's fashion of the 1920ies to the 1940ies show the many perspectives of passionately collecting fashion. These are further enhanced by showing important show pieces regarding the textile history of St. Gallen and Eastern Switzerland. The show invites you to reflect on your own consumerism and collecting issues: oscillating between your personal style, surplus goods and the borderline between collecting and letting things pile up. Artistic interventions by Andrea Vogel (Lumpensammlerin (Ragpicker), 2024) und Rebecca Bowring «l'étreinte, (knotting, knotted) 2020») deepen those questions from a modern point of view.

Textilmuseum.ch

felts forms are being tried out as a basis for your own projects. Dagmar Binder gives advice concerning the appropriate choice of materials and techniques and supports her clients throughout the entire process. Instead of a big object make several smaller ones. In the group, each member learns from the other and gathers valuable experience. It would be helpful if future clients have a basic understanding of feltmaking and working with resists.

wollknoll.eu

Self-made Sitting Cushions from Raw Wool

In this special workshop Frieder Glaser teaches how to make sitting cushions out of raw wool on May 9th and 10th 2026. The wool is processed at a stretch. The characteristic curls are maintained and don't felt together, resulting in lively, natural surfaces with a unique structure. If you want, the sitting furs can be strengthened with dyed wool at the backside. You can turn these artistic cushions around and each version opts for functionality and good design. Participants are encouraged to bring along their own wool supplies, important is only that it is evenly sheared. An alternative is toupet wool by Filzrausch. The workshop is ideal for felting enthusiasts with or without previous knowledge who would like to get to know an unusual technique with a highly individual outcome.

kurse.filzrausch.de

Felted Wall Objects – a Course with Dagmar Binder

Felt is a wonderful material to make pretty interior decorations from. Nature offers you all kinds of shapes and structures that may serve as an inspiration for your own work. The course «Gefilzte Wandobjekte mit Dagmar Binder (Felted Wall Objects with Dagmar Binder)» from May 4th to May 8th 2026 assists the participants from idea to finished object. A personal design, the right materials and resists are evaluated step-by-step and then your art object is ready to be felted. In an experimental phase, 3D

Filzkolleg 2026: «I'm from head to toe set on felting»

«Yes, this is my world / and nothing besides...» was the motto of the 2026 felting college. It is, as usual, organized by the Filznetzwerk e.V. in the felto-Filzwelt Soltau from June 22nd to 27th 2026. For a whole week, everything deals with feltmaking and the people who cherish working with this special material.

For the ninth time now, the Filzkolleg has been offering a wealth of day- and/or prolonged courses that explore the many different facets of the felting craft. At the same time, they offer an opportunity to get to know neighboring textile techniques and to take home many ideas for your workshop back home. Next to the demands of concentration required, there will also be plenty of time for networking, exchange and relaxation.

Clothes as a Recurrent Theme

This time, the organizers were set on feltmaking entirely and chose felted clothing as a focal point. Felt actually makes it possible to wrap yourself in airy lightness or again in comfy warmth, to dress and to make yourself pretty. The program comprises more than 20 courses dealing with big-size projects, clothing and accessories and decorative extras that give a last touch to the textile object.

Headgear, Jewelry and Textile Gems

Headgear in the shape of jolly caps are made under Frieder Glatzer's expert eyes, and Irina Kalaschnikow demonstrates with headbands how to felt elastic cuffs. Annemie Koenen shows how to make hats with a skilled hatter's precision. She also teaches how to make collars and other neck jewelry with 3 D surface structures and scarves with a certain twist.

~ The play around changing and your own face is the main subject of Anja Fröhlich's mask course. A hint of spring is found in Kerstin Scherr's light summer dresses. Sabine Reichert-Kassube experiments with lace-like, delicate felt structures in the shape of clothing or as jewelry for the head, neck or hand.

Jewelry, Buttons and Surfaces

Rings or bracelets are two more of Anja Fröhlich's themes. Different jewelry, but also curls and connecting elements can be made using the demonstrated Micro-Macramé-technique. Ilka Lehmann introduces those special knotting skills. After last year's success, button-making with Helene Weinold is to be continued. Kerstin Scherr teaches how to make bags with special surface structures. Heike Spiekermann uses cuffs as a playground for experimenting with painting on silk, acid colors and reserve techniques. A fascinating oscillation of colors on linen and leather you will learn from the eco print-specialist Rachel van der Weerd.

Function, Presentation and New Perspectives

Irina Kalaschnikow combines felt art with the shoemaker's trade in the shape of so-called barefoot shoes in a lengthy course. A breathable and robust shoe is felted on a comfortable sole which offers comfort and room to move. And whoever wants to just show her or his objects, or simply sell or play with them can learn how to set them best on scene in Ina Jeromin's video course.

ANNEMIE KOENEN, ANTJE ERNST

Please find the exact schedule and application for the Filzkolleg 2016 at: <https://filznetzwerk.de/filzkolleg-2026-programm/>

PAGES 10-13

Wearable Textile Art between Body, Sculpture and Idea

The Visins Museum of Textile Art (VMOTA) in San Diego presented the exhibit ARTwear from October 18th 2025 to January

31st 2026. On show were a choice of contemporary, wearable textile art objects that were originally published in the print issue of the Fiber Art Now magazine.

As an internationally renowned museum for textile art, the VMOTA offered the ideal framework for this show. The exhibition is said to be as spatial extension of the museum's repository. The show pieces were transposed from their two-dimensional context into an immediate bodily and spatial experience.

From Storage to Showroom

ARTwear is based on a juried choice of wearable art objects that had been previously published in the fall issue 2024 of Fiber Art Now. The magazine's creative team – among them Lori Butanis (Creative Director), Barbara Delaney (Editor), Beth Smith (Editor-in-Chief und Exhibition Director) as well as Cami Smith (Media Manager & Community Engagement) chose objects that stand exemplary for innovative approaches in the field of wearable art. «This exhibit

shows how versatile and powerful textile objects can be when they are meant to be worn without buckling under classical fashion terms», curator Lori Butanis explains.

Clothes as an Artistic Medium

In focus are objects that were conceptualized for being worn, yet distance themselves from the purely functional. The human body simultaneously becomes a stage, carrier and framework. The show pieces range between sculptures, installations, textile objects and pose questions regarding identity, presence and transformation. Many pieces change the body's silhouette, either enlarging or limiting it. Clothing here is not an everyday issue but a narrating medium dealing with personal experiences, roles in society or cultural belonging.

Materiality, Technique and Form

One central characteristic of ARTwear is the wide range of materials and techniques involved. There are intricately layered textiles; raw, material-enhancing surfaces and also finely executed objects with many details. Different natural and artificial fibers, handicraft skills and experiments as well as unusually constructed designs give distinction to the exhibit.

~ Many of the works shown are mindful of wearable sculpture. They enhance the weight, rigidity or fragility of textiles and thereby query general ideas of clothing. The tension between the wearable and the unwearable is consciously proclaimed and applied as a designing medium.

Depth in Content and Narrative Levels

Next to the variety of forms, ARTwear persuades through the works' varied content. Many objects deal with issues like provenance, gender, memory, protection, vulnerability and self-assertion. Some look like veritable textile armors, others like fragile sheaths or protective membranes. They all have in common that they don't illustrate meaning but render it visible via the materials, structures and movements involved. The physicality of the objects plays a central role and only when imagined being worn many of those objects reach a full effect.

LARA PYTER

Voices from the Fiber Art Now

«I was lucky to attend the ARTwear opening at the Visions Museum of Textile Art in San Diego, California. The show presented a choice of the juried print show of Fiber Art Now that was published in the magazine's fall issue of 2024. Each piece showed a different perspective regarding the concept of wearable art. The choice of objects was wonderfully curated by the museum staff and showed a varied palette of fashion, including evening gowns and different accessories. The curator and education manager Armando Garcia-Orso succeeded in presenting an exquisite installation where each and every item was deserving of the limelight.»

BETH SMITH, CHIEF EDITOR AND EXHIBITION MANAGER OF FIBER ART NOW

«Each work of art in the ARTwear show catches a unique artistic expression of the human shape. In a conscious effort, we have curated the print exhibit with many different objects of which we hope to surprise our visitors and to inspire them to make their own creations. We were on the lookout for materials and techniques which we had never seen before, that may lead us to a journey not yet undertaken and of expanding limits the we didn't know existed in the first place.»

LORI BUTANIS, CREATIVE DIRECTOR, FIBER ART NOW

fiberartnow.net/blog/out-and-about-san-diego-county-california/

PAGES 14-15

Handicraft, Variety and Tradition

During the weeks before Christmas 2025, members of the Applied Arts Group Düsseldorf (AKD) organized two exhibits of various artistic fields well worth seeing. Felt artist Heike Reul presented her felted fashion there.

At the exhibit KUNST HANDWERK DESIGN (ART CRAFT DESIGN) at the Museumsscheune Krefeld-Linn interested parties could experience unique and individual objects on November 22nd and 23rd. Twelve artists showed their hand-made objects, each with her or his special signature. You could discover and buy crafted items of different fields: ceramics, textiles, photographs, leather and porcelain as well as jewelry and steel furniture. The felt artist Heike Reul presented garments like waistcoats and coats with trains which combine art and fashion in an astounding way. Her surprising fashion combines flowing, soft material like chiffon with coarsely-structured, heavy silk fabrics. Painted silk and Nuno felting are of major importance regarding preferred techniques. The Museumsscheune (approx. museum barn) of the Linn castle in the old town quarters of Krefeld-Linn offered an atmospheric ambience. This and the beautiful exhibits made the occasion very special.

UNIKATE in Düsseldorf

The show UNIKATE (Unique Pieces) took place in the Atriumsfoyer at the Chamber of Commerce Düsseldorf from December 2nd to 9th 2025. About 40 members of the AKD (Applied Arts Düsseldorf) showed their fancy and extraordinary objects: Textile specialties, imaginative jewelry, wooden objects, containers made from ceramics or porcelain, natural stone objects, others made of concrete and photography. In co-operation with the Chamber of Commerce Düsseldorf UNIKATE sets the stage for the exhibitors' most beautiful works. Many visitors liked to purchase chosen objects and there was even a chance to win some at a lottery. The show was well worth visiting and this tradition will continue – at the weekend of the 1st Advent 2026.

HEIKE REUL

angewandte-kunst-duesseldorf.com
kunstgewand.de

PAGES 16-19

New Ornaments for the St. Wendelin Church

In 2022, Kerstin Scherr was commissioned by the Protestant Church congregation Remseck to make four new sets of religious vestments or ornaments for the St. Wendelin church in Hochdorf. In the beginning of 2025, she finished this creative, yearlong process that had been intensely demanding and enriching at the same time. She reports on the making of the vestments.

In the beginning, I studied the liturgical church colors and the spatial character of the Wendelin church. Vestments and ornaments are the calling card of a church. They display the respective sections of the ecclesiastical year and characterize the atmosphere. I wanted to make these effects more visible and noticeable. I will always be grateful for the assistance of the former pastor, a lady. Regular exchange helped me to contextualize liturgical questions and to make clear design choices. During these three years, I studied relief and mosaic techniques. With each new vestment, I developed further ideas and my technical skills became more versatile and more precise. A constant source of impression was the effects of the ornaments in the church. Often, I only realized on site which last finishing touches were necessary. After the fourth vestment was finished, the St. Wendelin church now shines in a new, harmonious liturgical way – and a very special creative phase ended for me.

White – Birth and a New Start

White stands for the light that Jesus brought into the world. Since everybody perceives this light differently, I worked with several hues of white. Different color lines stand for our ways in life. Three vertical lines symbolize sudden interruptions which often mark new beginnings. Between the larger surfaces, there are transparent lines which take up the sheer altar cross. They are mindful that God sees through our lives. The moving lines symbolize the flow of life. On the pulpit vestment, a circle stands for the center – as God's eye, as a symbol of the Last Supper congregation or as the rising sun at Easter.

Purple – Longing for Metamorphosis and Healing

The many small colored areas depict the fragmentation of our life. Lighter areas call to mind the good times, dark ones spell crises. A kind of sunbeam that gets narrower toward the top reminds us of the fact that our way through life will end, but it also symbolizes a ladder towards the heavens. Golden prints show hope: On the pulpit vestment, the golden cross connects the fragments of the world. On the big vestment, two thin golden lines represent God's closeness to us – up in heaven and down on earth.

Red – Fire, Love and Enthusiasm

Red is the color of movement and holy fire. In the middle of the vestments are one or more circles which resemble like a fireball around which people gather. The single points and areas mean encounters and new impulses that enable us to change. The circle can take on different meanings: Some see the universe through which God's love flows. As «images of faith» vestments and ornaments leave room for your own interpretations.

Green – Nature, Growth and Hope

Green stands for growth. Leaves of grass of different shapes and sizes point to different phases of life: light for high times, dark for sorrowful times, thick for wealth and narrow for painful experiences or breaks. One grass blade grows over the parament in direction of the earth – the basis of all life. The sun hints at Easter and Resurrection and finishes the circle towards the white vestment. Its rays allow for growth and a quiet, green surface in the background symbolizes God's supportive presence.

Mosaic and Relief Technique

The objects were made in the mosaic technique. Colored wool pieces are put together like a mosaic in relief technique, which creates elevated surfaces and three-dimensional patterns. From all those experiences I am presently developing several felting courses for 2026, amongst others, the theme will be «gold» which is becoming more and more important in my artistic work.

KERSTIN SCHERR

Kerstin Scherr

Under her label TROLLINO, Kerstin Scherr designs textile unique objects from felt – hand-made, full of details and variety.

Her jackets, bags and objects are made in a creative process where materials, colors and forms meet in a natural way. Each object carries the traces of an intense joy in experimenting and tells us of a designer who understands feltmaking as a proper way of expression – sensual, free and with a quiet strength. Her special passion is to pass on her expertise in courses here and abroad, always lively, inspiring and in constant dialogue with people who share her passion for feltmaking.
www.trollino.de

PAGES 22-25

To See the World with Your Hands

Felt is a material that doesn't have to be seen to understand it. It is tactile, it can be touched and felt. For Sugandha Gupta, this is the greatest gift. The 38-year-old textile artist lives and works in Queens in New York, in the middle of a bustling city that she experiences via textures, sounds and motion. As a legally blind artist she found not only a suitable medium in the shape of felt, but an entirely new language that allows her to express herself freely, self-determined and without compromises.

She grew up in New Delhi, a pulsating metropolis, rich in contrasts, smells, surfaces and rhythm. As a person with albinism and severely diminished eyesight, she experiences the city not in a visual way but in terms of closeness and distance, textures and sounds – all of that found its way into her art. The city shaped her, as did New York later in life. Both cities are connected in their urban density that determines her creative mind until today. She started felting in 2016 at the start of her graduate studies at Savannah College of Art and Design. A demonstration by professor Jennifer Moss was a turning point. She was already familiar with the Indian felting tradition Namda, but here she found a new dimension of the material. «I was enamored by the possibilities that wool fibers presented through felt», she remembers. One thing fully convinced her: this craft is completely tactile.

A Craft Beyond Eyesight

Feltmaking requires attention, patience and a fine sense of touch – not necessarily

for the eyes, but mostly for the hands. For Sugandha this doesn't mean a constraint, but a liberation. «You have to rely on your tactile senses and on what the materials tell you», she says.

«Of course, technique, fiber knowledge and a great deal of experience are crucial as well. Still, the true beauty of feltmaking, according to her, lies within the process itself – in learning by doing, in applying basic principles, to expand them in thought. Felt for her is not only a malleable material, but an ethical issue, a re-growing fiber, open for circular economy and sustainable design.

Imagination and Improvisation Prevail

Sugandha cannot afford a studio of her own in New York City. Instead, the resourceful felter turned her decently sized one-room apartment into a functional workspace. There is a big table for pre-felting, the kitchen counter serves as a wet-felting area, the shower curtain rod to dry wool. «I have developed a system for making large felts that involves making panels», she explains. She makes each panel herself and pieces them together to create larger pieces for yardage. This kind of improvisation is not a dire necessity, but part of her artistic practice – proof of resilience and confidence. She is convinced: A bigger studio will happen.

«Sugandha Gupta considers herself a professional felter. She works with all kinds of felting techniques, including dry- and wet-felting. Countless hours of experiments, teachings and finishings lay behind her. As an educator for textile- and fiber processes, her artistic practice is meshed into her life seamlessly. At the same time, she is deeply engaged in community work that is tailored to individual needs. She teaches, exhibits her objects and develops visual and tactile presentation formats and she works to order as well. Her experience in day-to-day activities – like walking with a cane, touching objects or looking them up closely, visiting barrier-free art events – stimulate her as an artist: «My art explorations in return are opportunities for sparking conversations around access, accessibility in design», she says adding: «And even create moments of comfort and joy.»

Sensory Textiles – Fabrics for Body, Mind and Memory

Her body of work titled «Sensory Textiles» consists of textiles, wearables

and sculpture works. As a person with Albinism, she explores creating textures that reflect her experience as a woman of color and an immigrant. She works with Merino, Mohair, Alpaca, Blue Faced Leicester, Cashmere and various kinds of silk fabrics, mostly in natural hues.

“ Her conscious decision against dyeing is motivated by ecological issues, but also because natural hues and tones reflect the experience of the Albinism community that have many different skin and hair colors. She also loves using curly BFL wool fibers to reflect the different hair types. She finds that wool and human hair have many points of communality. Wool becomes a metaphor for human physicality. One example is her tent dress from Alpaca, BFL and Tussah silk – soft, protective, many-layered. The different hues of brown from the Alpaca are used to paint over the cream white BFL wool, like a memory, like skin or lived experience.

Inspiration, Process and Material Dialogue

She finds inspiration from her daily encounters such as the texture of tiles on the road, roots, mushrooms, pebbles and the sounds in nature. She also finds inspiration through encounters such as the touch of a special rabbit fur, of velvet or the movement of a ballet dancer.

“ At the beginning of her making stages, she creates patterns and material swatches. Pleats, fragility, lightness – everything is examined, developed, taken further. Most of the time, she works with her hands but sometimes she uses needles or machines for big-size projects.

“ She creates special effects from making special templates, intentional gaps in the batt, varied amounts of fulling and also extensive fulling for additional stiffness. Some pieces are steamed, stitched or pieced together for sculptural effects. Always, the process determines the result.

LARA PYTER

Felting changed Sugandha Gupta's life for the better and offered the opportunity to work as a crafts person in the US, she was one of three students to participate in the American Craft Council. Her skills and expertise became her primary identifier, not her impairment. She gained self-confidence and self-worth and being a felters identifies her as an artisan. In her work, she is committed to inclusion, barrier-

free institutions and the appreciative perception of different abilities.
Web site: sugandhainhere.wixsite.com/website
Instagram: [sugandha.in.here](https://www.instagram.com/sugandha.in.here/) & [sensory_textiles](https://www.instagram.com/sensory_textiles/)
Blog: sgupta6330.blogspot.com/2022/05/

PAGES 26-29

Heart and Wool

Diana Balducci from Saluggia in the Piedmont, Italy, turned her passion for feltmaking into a new career. Over the years, she has been following this creative calling with devotion and a strong sense of sustainability.

The 53-year-old felt artist lives with her partner Daniele and her son Simone in the Po Valley in the Vercelli province. Her love for feltmaking began rather coincidentally in 2007: «In that year, two friends brought me a small book about Berlin architecture and a small felted box back from their trip. I became curious and looked around for such a material», says Daniela Balducci, an architect by profession. First experiments with industrial felt soon led her to make note book covers. Two wool felt plates changed everything eventually – she wanted to learn more about feltmaking. She began studying the wet-felting technique in Milan in 2009.

A New Start Under Difficult Circumstances

The years before the pandemic brought professional insecurity, due to a crisis of the building sector and private challenges, so she turned her back on architecture altogether. COVID was the turning point: In 2021, Daniela decided to become a professional feltmaker. With wool from her cupboard and her first client sitting at her kitchen table she started her own business. Soon she moved into her spacious former family house, making ample room for her studio with a shop window and a generous space for wool, creativity and encounter. You hear the birdsong in the garden and cats tiptoe in the yard to tease the border collie that belongs to Daniela's mother.

A Passion for Material and Technique

The artist tells us happily: «I simply love felting, I love the smell of soapy wool,

I smell it while it dries and I turn every piece around in my hands to hear and feel the sound of dry felt.» She prefers to work with Mountain Sheep Wool from around Bozen, but she also likes Merino and experiments with mixed materials, yarns and even paper. A friend of hers who spins makes special yarns for her. She cherishes working with other craftspeople, carried by friendship and mutual support. Even as a child, she loved dyeing, so it remained a fixed element of her art. «I still love it, but in summer there are often problems with the water supply and the energy cost is substantial. I decided to concentrate on small solar vases or some papers in the eco-print technique, so I can use the hot water for felting on my nearby table. For me, sustainability and saving energy is just as important as recycling water and fabrics», so the artist. Inspired by her architectural background, she attaches great importance to precision, symmetry and volume. She makes cache-pots, bags and accessories, often in the needle-felting technique. Colors are courageously combined; she plays with contrasts and makes structures like her bull's eyes, concentric circles that she puts on bags, sheaths or vases.

Exhibitions and Co-Operations

In 2012, Daniela presented her objects for the first time in the community exhibit «Policromie Gemelle» in Saluggia in 2012. In 2023 followed an invitation by the artists Gianni Tamburelli who integrated her owls and birds in his single show. «I hope to be able to continue my work for a long time to come, to develop the art of feltmaking further and to teach it.»

LARA PYTER

Daniela Balducci has made her feltmaking passion into a full career. In her studio she creates bags, accessories and other objects made from Mountain Sheep or Merino wool – always with a lot of love for detail, precision and sustainability.

Instagram: [daniela_infeltriscimi](https://www.instagram.com/daniela_infeltriscimi/)
Website: infeltriscimi.it

Tutorial: Fairy House Bag

This beautiful fairy house bag, made from felt and a lively imagination, is perfect for children.

Material:

- ~ Felting wool in green, light-blue, dark-blue, pink, brown and yellow
- ~ 2 felt sheets in white and pink (20 x 30 cm)
- ~ Thin white yarn Thick pink yarn
- ~ 2 buttons
- ~ Yarn needle
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Felting equipment: felting mat and felting needle

Instructions:

1 Take the white felt sheet and cut off 6 to 7 cm.

2 Put some green wool relatively far to the left onto the sheet and felt a lengthy surface. This represents a meadow.

3 Felt a narrow stem on the left side of the «meadow», curving upward from the green wool.

4 Put the light-blue wool in the resulting shape and felt it carefully. It should make a door.

5 Felt thin vertical lines from the dark-blue wool onto the light-blue surface and a small dot as a detail.

6 Felt small, lengthy dots along the stem with green wool for leaves.

7 Felt in tiny roses along the stem with the pink wool.

8 To the right of the meadow with the door felt in several small stems.

9 Felt blossoms and leaves onto the small stems.

10 On the upper right place a window from the yellow wool.

11 Make the crossbar from brown wool.

12 Using an overcast stitch, sew from left to right at the sides and below. Leave the upper part of the felt plate open to make for a bag. The pink plate is neatened with the overcast stitch as well to make the bag prettier.

13 Now take 90 cm long pieces each of the green, pink and light-blue wool batches. Knot them above and braid them for a handle.

14 Fasten the handle at the right and left side of the workpiece with the yarn needle.

15 At the end, place the buttons right and left onto the white felt sheet and sew them on with the thin white yarn.

16 To finish the buttonholes, cut a small horizontal button hole right and left at the right and left side. It should be shorter than the buttons' diameter. Then widen them carefully with your fingers or the scissor tip until the button goes just through.

INSTRUCTIONS: DAMLA

Since Damla has become a mother, she re-discovered her creative side. Especially wet and dry felting give her a lot of joy. She started with wet-felting and made many unique felted landscapes. Her first dry-felting project was the fairy house bag which mirrors her love for detail. Each item is made with a lot of patience, devotion and a full heart. She informs on the creative process on social media and takes her students along step by step. Instagram: [@kleinezauberstube](https://www.instagram.com/kleinezauberstube)

«A Favorite Way to Reduce Stress»

At the age of 67, the British felt artist Kathy Hoath does not look back but forward instead. Pension days are not the final notes, but a whole cornucopia of possibilities. «I love this phase in my life», she says, and you believe every word. It means rest, but marks the beginning of times where forms, colors and fibers get their due.

For almost a quarter of a century, Kathy worked as a bookkeeper and in finance, and before she made tooth crowns and pontics in her job as a dental laboratory technician. This is precision work which requires patience and a skilled eye – and comes in just as handy today. In March 2025 she married her partner of eighteen years. They moved into a house in one of the ancient villages of Milton Keynes east of London in Great Britain, a place where rural charm and city sophistication meet. «We can walk for hours in a pastoral landscape in one direction, and there is a bus to reach the city in a few minutes in the other.» Kathy really chose the best of two worlds.

Her Pathway to Feltmaking

Around 2010, she entered the world of feltmaking. First, she needle-felting, inspired by impressive relief portraits at an exhibition. Forever curious, she started wet-felting. It seemed interesting – and rather chaotic, too. Not really suited for her small flat. But there came a moment that changed it all. «Simply love at first sight», Kathy remembers. She learned quickly how to use the water properly and found much more than a pastime. «It is not only a way to pass the time, for me it's a necessity». The haptics of wool, its different hues, even its smell seemed like an anchor to her. Feltmaking became a way to relax and soon formed a part of her life.

A Creative Place

The former bedroom of her new home has been made into her studio. Wool, tools and colors – everything is well ordered. Feltmaking is the center but there are other skills to be practiced as well. She sketches, paints, sews, works with Fimo and even tries her hand in wood work in the garage. Her sewing machine, which she bought 40 years ago is mainly used for free stitching. This studio does not resemble a museum but is a lively working place where she can plan, dismiss and think anew about her many projects.

Material, Technique and the Courage to Control

Kathy works mainly with pre-dyed Merino and she adds rougher fibers if sturdiness is required. She dyes herself, mixes colors with a teasel and also uses the microwave oven or a dyeing container, depending on the quantity or the desired result. She also uses odd materials, like the fur of angora rabbits, paper, mulberry bark, wire or book resists.

The different shrinkages is a central creative issue. Varying thickness, fiber direction, pre-felts and fulling degrees result in balanced, exciting forms and shapes. For decoration, she uses Nuno elements, yarns, plant fibers, embroidery, beads, acrylic colors or leaf gold to enrich the surface, sometimes barely visible.

«I do a lot of planning», says Kathy, «but I also work spontaneously.» If a work piece offers resistance it turns into a riddle that wants to be solved. She likes the challenge. The finishing is often done with a Bunsen burner or a hot-air gun in order to remove the lint. Sometimes, a piece is stuffed or stiffened with shellack or a PVA solution to secure their form or to make them sturdier.

Her objects are mostly abstract and three-dimensional. She is fascinated by forms, regardless whether they are found in nature, mathematics, architecture, technical fields or in mythology. Felt, however, has a mind of its own, which she accepts without blinking. She adapts to it, relaxes her reins and changes. Each unique object clearly shows her signature. «I gather the unusual forms are responsible for that», she thinks. «They banter with you and keep asking: How on earth was that done?»

Being Grounded and Content

Next to feltmaking, Kathy loves to go for walks, taking photographs, working with wood, free embroidery, riddles and patient hours at her computer. She describes herself as well-grounded, realistic and pragmatic. «Life at the moment is really beautiful», she says serenely. And you can feel that this contentment comes not from a stillstand but out of movement and the will and readiness to learn new things and to listen to the material. In Kathy Hoath's objects prevail experience, curiosity and the bubbling joy that wool, water and her hands find their own way together.

DIANA PYTER

Many of Kathy Hoath's art objects can be looked and bought via her website and Instagram. She has shown her work in exhibits all over Britain and some of her smaller works could be seen at the Freya Jones Gallery in Buckingham from Nov. 1st 2025 to January 31st 2026. Instagram: *kathy_hoath* Website: *artfibrations.uk*

PAGES 38-41

Tutorial: Hawaiian Sunset

This felted image by Laura Gutzwiller takes us on a brightly colored trip the Kona Beach in Hawaii.

Material:

Base: Wool felt sheet in light/white
Wool and Fibers:

- ~ Sky: Purple/violet yarns, orange/yellow yarns
- ~ Water: Different shades of blue, white
- ~ Special Effect Fibers: Tussah silk, Merino/silk blends, bamboo top (shining, for light reflexes) in magenta, orange, yellow, white, greyish brown, emerald, dark blue
- ~ Sand: Reddish brown, light beige, dark brown

Tools:

- ~ Felting mat and topper (e.g. 20 x 20 cm)
- ~ Multi-purpose felting needle
- ~ Dry-felting needle
- ~ Scissors

Basic Principle and Composition:

The image is built up of three areas

- ~ Sky (upper third)
- ~ Sand (lower third)
- ~ Water, breaking waves (overlapping)

Order is as follows: Sky, water, sand. Always fold the fibers approx. 0.5 cm over the edges, so later the base sheet doesn't shine through.

Instructions:

1) The Sky

1 Put on the light purple base generously in the upper third and pull it straight.

2 Distribute purple/smoky hues in small dots as clouds. Put the darker purple wool near the horizon as shadow clouds.

3 Place tiny amounts of the darkest purple or blue as deep shadows at the lower edge of the purple clouds.

4 Enhance the purple cloud layer with delicate rose and dark orange colors (finely spread out) in a demi-circle in the direction of the horizon.

5 Now choose lighter and lighter colors and add small dots in the lightest yellow near the sun.

6 Set the sun: Yellow/gold is formed to a small sphere and placed. Highlight the sun with light yellow fibers.

7 Felt everything on vertically with the multi-purpose felting needle and take care that the fibers are not slanted. Smooth the edges and the bigger areas – this takes quite long.

8 Use the felting needle to felt the edge of the sun cleanly and round and re-work the clouds' edges. If fibers vanish pull them slightly up front again.

9 Once everything is fixed fold the edges over and felt them on in the back.

10 For a finishing touch, put delicate white and shining fibers onto the clouds' edges and work them on selectively with the needle. Use less at the edges where the light falls in.

2) The Sand

11 Put brown color as the first sand layer in a slightly diagonally arranged line.

12 Distribute reddish-brown wool below the orange-colored cloud areas (mirroring effect) and light sandy beige in the lower right corner. A kind of mushroom color should be used in the area where the water meets the sand.

13 Fix the sand lightly with a few stitches so it doesn't shift

3) The Water

14 Main body of water: Lay out a 3-4 cm wide strip of Merino/silk blend horizontally (fibers in the direction of the water) Felt it on well horizontally with the multi-purpose felting needle, so the water structure is rendered kind of flowing.

15 Now fold the edges over and felt them onto the back as before.

4) Special Effects: Building Breaking Waves (the «Fun Part»)

16 Coastline: Place a tiny piece of Sil/Merino where the first wave breaks onto the sand.

17 Orange worm trick: Slightly turn in an orange-colored fiber and felt it along the water/sand edge in an irregular line. Put in a few dots of yellow bamboo top next to orange fibers for light reflexes.

18 First wave: Turn emerald-colored Bamboo top fiber slightly around, the left side should remain a bit thicker. This looks like a wave breaking. Add thinner, shorter and less showy waves to the outer sea area.

19 Coastline dimensions: Put dark lines (e.g. dark purple) under and between the breaking waves, this connects the colors of the sky with those of the water.

5) Depth & Contrast & Finishing

20 Arrange dark blue fibers in a thin line at the horizon (dividing water/sky) and as shadows below the waves (the shadows they cast). Put on white Bamboo Top as a clear foam edge along the coastline at the top of the biggest wave as the lightest spot.

21 Darn or stuff holes or too thin areas with basic color (e.g. «mushroom»).

22 Further color effects: Add yellow and orange fibers below the sun area in the water and the wave.

23 For finishing felt everything on smoothly until sturdiness is reached: Use the multi-purpose felting needle for bigger areas and a single needle for the edges, details and precise lines.

24 Pull any loose fibers at the edges to the back and felt them on.

INSTRUCTIONS: LAURA GUTZWILLER

PAGES 42-45

Soft, Round, With a Lot of Character

A tiny storm lamp was the beginning of a great passion: Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke – also known under her pseudonym Charlotte von Liesendahl – has found her own, unmistakable way to the feltmaking craft. With clarity, artisan precision and love for the provenance of wool she creates unique, simple and durable objects.

A small storm lamp started it all, felted in the Waldorf kindergarten that her son frequented ten years ago. «I still have this storm lamp», Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke tells us. Her enthusiasm to work with wool, water and soap was kindled. She felted a cardboard cornet for her boy's first day in school with a gold beetle motif – a project right from the heart that not only gave her a lot of joy but also strengthened her trust in life. «I did that», she said, proudly. Since then, a lot has happened. Today, Solvig felts with clear thoughts in mind: She loves the natural, the original, and the big sizes, «I prefer to use wool from where I know the sheep», she says. The provenance of the material plays a crucial role in her art. It is not only about aesthetics or haptics, but this natural material deserves estimation, even though it is not widely known. The public knows her under her pseudonym Charlotte von Liesendahl. She holds courses and presents her works at exhibitions. Her signature is a green apple – quaint, round and full of character, an echo of her work.

Quality and Reduction

Solvig's art objects are of a high measure of artisan precision. She usually begins with a spontaneous idea, followed by planning, trying, dismissing and making things better. The quality standard being high, it may take eight hours to make a big felted basket. «Better it is of good quality and long-lasting, contrary to fast and cheap», is her motto. She loves robust usable felt items such as bowls, baskets or sitting mats – always big and functional, but reduced in terms of shape and color. ~ During the past years, she specialized on large felted bowls and baskets for chimney wood and for shopping – all made from naturally-hued regional Mountain Sheep wool. This specialization is an expression of her clear felting signature: reduced, powerful and always

in close touch with nature. Her work shows a deep respect for the felting process as it is: «Anticipatory felting is important for me – it is the cornerstone for the end result.» Also calculating the shrinking factors, the correct choice of wool, the handling of the resists and the play with form and function are elements of her skillful expertise. She likes to experiment with natural materials such as linen or hemp fibers, always staying true to her line: simple, clear, reduced to the essential. «Felted things are often way too playful in my opinion – I like it quiet in optics and surface feel.»

~ She is very proud of her sitting mat for the kitchen bench – an object she designed and developed during an online course. It is in everyday use. «It reminds me every day how much joy felting gives me.» There may be artistic blocks, but she remains cool: «Then I just don't felt, it will surely pass.»

Sustainable Felting Craft

Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke increased her artistic endeavors in the past couple of years with great curiosity and care. Early on she had already found her own felting style, which is an expression of her personality and her path. Right now, she has a new idea: Large felted bowls as wall objects. She also wants to extend her range of felting courses and she seeks to obtain the quality seal by the Filznetzwerk e.V. This represents one further step to broaden the awareness of a high-quality, sustainable felting craft. An important milestone was the renovation of her workshop in the late summer of 2025. Now her felting table is even bigger and has a water drain, 2 x 1 m for large projects like baskets or carpets and suitable for group events. So, she is even more inclined and capable of attracting an audience for this ancient craft.

Regional Felting and Fulling Tools

She can show and sell her art objects via Instagram, her online shop or at regional craft fairs, e.g. around Christmas time. People respond well, confirming her in her belief in her artistic path. «Many keep saying how beautiful the material is, how good it feels to the touch and how light it is.» In the future, Solvig plans to add hand-made, regional felting and fulling pins to her products. This again proves that high-class tools and sustainable materials are related. And what is her advice for beginners? «Study the basics well, make sufficient room for your work and be prepared to invest quite some time», she points out. «Felt is a material

that calls for patience. But it is extremely worthwhile, especially if two of the necessary ingredients are sustainably bred wool and pure enthusiasm.»

INA BIRKE

Solvig Rosenberger-Solmecke is not only a committed lecturer in her courses but she also hosts a podcast with Ina Birke called: Volle Brause. Since September 2024 they discuss issues around the worlds of wool, creativity and the felting craft – authentic, merry and experienced. Tune in every other Thursday.

www.charlottevonliesendahl.de

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

www.filz-podcast.de

PAGES 46-49

An Intoxication of Colors and Nature

In the needle-felted art objects made by the US artist Laura Gutzwiller, expert textile techniques and emotional depth merge into poetic landscapes. They tell of attentiveness, inner healing and the serene power of nature. With needles and fibers, she creates colorful paintings that reveal a lot of feeling and commitment.

Laura Gutzwiller is a self-taught fiber artist. With her husband Chuck and six pets she lives in Valparaiso, Indiana. Surrounded by trees and cornfields, it is the perfect setting for her home studio that she set up in a former guest room – a perfect, quiet place to work for a full-time fiber artist. Her favorite means of expression is needle felt art for her atmospheric, slightly impressionistic landscapes. Her focus is on light, hope and peaceful moments

From Giving Help to Healing Creativity

Laura Gutzwiller was a creative and crafty child. Her dream was to become an art teacher. Yet her path to art turned out to be difficult and demanding. After earning a degree in Exercise Science and Sports Medicine, she followed a career as a personal trainer for many years. The wish to help and support people was always accompanying her. Only the tragic loss of her only brother, and the shock,

grief and exhaustion, leading her into depressive phases and a conscious time-out, caused by the pandemic, guided her back to her creative senses in 2020.

«I just love the act of creation», she says in hindsight. The turning point came with a small kit called needle felting that she found in a local craft store. Despite initially frustrating experiences, working with wool soon turned into a kind of meditative practice. «The process of needle-felting is simple and I can easily fix mistakes and not to be so hard on myself», she explains. The rhythmic stitching became a grounding technique that helped disconnect her thoughts from all distractions of TV, phones and screens.

The Vividness of Life

Art is such a vital form of self-expression. «For me, art helped to reconnect a part of myself that had faded away. The part that wanted to sit and watch the clouds change in the sky for hours. The part that made me stop and appreciate a flower growing through a paved street. The side of myself that is mindful, present and focused on the beauty all around us», she tells us. «When I see how much my art has changed over even the last few years, I am shocked. It is as if I had put on a new pair of glasses and started seeing the world completely different. The vividness of life.»

These days, Laura Gutzwiller is working as a full-time artist and sells her work in juried art shows around the United States. All her art is packed into her van, along with a sturdy tent that she sets up to hang her art on display. «I get to meet every single person who is interested in my art and likes to talk about felting. We get to share stories», the artist muses. «The most amazing things have happened when I am vulnerable and honest about my struggles. The more genuine I am with my own feelings, the safer others feel to open up to me as well. It is so healing to be appreciated and heard...and I keep finding a new way to help people in my life.»

Working With Fibers and Needles

Each of 38-year-old Laura Gutzwiller's creations begin as a 100% wool sheet, cut to size, usually white. It's like a blank canvas that she uses to start layering fibers onto. She starts with the top edge and works her way down to the bottom edge, overlapping the fibers so the backing is completely covered. For larger areas. She uses tools with several needles, for delicate details single special felting needles.

«Each needle has its own voice – I can define edges or make delicate shadows»,

she says. She works with twelve different kinds of fibers. Merino, Corriedale-, Māori- and Mountain Sheep batting turn into clouds, fields or trees. Lama and Alpaca wool she uses for lengthier structures such as grass blades, boughs or rock crevices. Silk and bamboo fibers make for shimmering light effects. «I love experimenting with different textures and seeing what it can do. To see how the light reacts to different kinds of fibers. I try to get hold of a feeling or an atmosphere – not every single little detail. My works take on an impressionistic style, as I play with colors, light and shadow», explains the artist.

Nature, Remembrance and Atmosphere

Most of her pieces are based on memory, from travelling or her immediate surroundings. They invite you to be still for a moment and to rejoice in the resilience and beauty of nature. «My art is very personal. To be present, to see the reaction of others is a crucial element of my art.» So many visitors seem deeply touched by the subjects light and hope. For Laura Gutzwiller, needle-felting is much more than just a textile technique. It is at the same time a language, healing and a connection. Her works show in arresting way how much expressive potential fibers can have and how, from wool, patience and emotional awareness, a powerful imagery is created.

LARA PYTER

Website: FeltingbyLaura.com
E-Mail-Address FeltingbyLaura@gmail.com

PAGES 50-51

A Companion for Eternity

Annemie Koenen felts individual «life blankets». These big-sized pieces of cloth are made in a communal crafty effort and often accompany their makers for many years. At the end of life, they can be used for wraps or shrouds for the last journey. The Dutch felt artist explains:

One day all our lives will end. This fact is a part of mankind, as it is of the natural world around us. It is painful to grasp,

especially when it concerns a person dear to us. We experience grief, pain and a loss that can hardly be measured. In my feltmaking I often encounter his matter – and I try to be delicate, respectful and thankful. More and more people decide to take their last journey wrapped in a felted shroud. But as long as their people are alive, they serve as cuddly, warm companions.

A Communal Effort

I make felt cloths on a regular basis, mostly they measure 2m x 3 m. Often I work together with the client or family members and friends. Sometimes I am asked to make it on my own. A person may have already passed away when we start felting. And sometimes there is no hint of an untimely farewell.

~ I love to make them when death is still a long way away. Then we call it a life blanket. Working together results in a deep bond. Everybody can contribute – a color, a gesture, a memory. It results in a whole that carries you safely through wherever you may go.

~ This togetherness helps to lessen grief a bit. It is comforting and strengthening to make such a blanket together. Also, loss and grief are shared, they may be present but they cannot overwhelm us. For me, this kind of work is always very special and healing. It is a great honor to be able to be a part of this journey with or for others.

Warmth, Comfort and Farewell

The life spread accompanies a person ideally for many years. Especially in the cold season, felt is a wonderful material to wrap yourself in. It can be a bedspread, a sofa rug or lie on the floor on and everywhere else where comfort and warmth are in need. You can hide yourself in, alone or with others. To take such a familiar, beloved source of warmth onto your last journey is a loving thought – for the ones that go and for the ones who remain. The life rug turns into a shroud without losing its sense or history. To felt together creates closeness and a caring way to deal with a subject that is closely connected to life.

ANNEMIE KOENEN

Message of a co-worker on a live rug who was present throughout the process:

Dear all,
we remember with a lot of warmth and love the day when Annemie felted the

life rug with us. It was a wonderful and special day. Yesterday we received the finished blanket. It is incredibly beautiful and together we really made it work. We highly appreciate that you all contributed to this kind atmosphere where everybody felt welcome. This feeling went into the blanket. When the time comes, it will carry me with love. But I intend to enjoy the blanket for many more years to come! Due to Annemie's expertise the rug came to life and she was always a generous and caring support during our work together.

If you are interested in such a life rug, the doors to Annemie Koenen are wide open.
<https://annemiekoenen.com>
vilt@annemiekoenen.nl

PAGES 52-55

«Wool, Humans, the Sheep»

Walter Aigner is man whose path in life was characterized by one material that many still underestimate: wool. More and more sheep keepers cannot make ends meet anymore and huge amounts of wool is put to waste in Europe; the Austrian wool manufacturer made a documentation about this controversial subject.

«Once you get used to the smell of wool you won't forget it in a lifetime», the man from Vorarlberg claims. He grew up in his father's weaving manufacture that he had founded in the 1960ies. Young Walter was often present when the carpets were hand-woven. The smell, the dust, the routine: «I was dunked in wool lint», he remembers the early days. Later came industrial processing. Aigner worked for almost 25 years in the family venture, for a long time he was the manager and partner and was responsible for a production the dimensions of which are hardly imaginable in the crafts' world. Their main product remained the production of hand-woven carpets.

~ In 2018 he left the company. There had been conflicts with majority shareholders and he «was through with carpets or wool altogether.» He was looking for a conscious break and worked in a totally different field, social housing concepts for people with little income. All of a sudden, the impulse to reconsider

working with wool again came back. The turning point was a call from his friend, the Austrian actor Harald Krassnitzer, shortly after Easter 2021. Krassnitzer had met a shepherd during a hike in Northern Germany and had asked him what he does with the shorn wool. The answer was like a blow in his face. «We throw it away, what else?» Krassnitzer was indignant. «Walter, you got to do something about that.» At first, Aigner declined: «I am surely not starting again!» But the idea kept nudging him.

Reaching for the Camera Himself

Both men talked for a long time and finally came up with the idea of a documentation about sheep and their wool. Aigner was assigned the research and writing a script. He studied the matter for eight years, «read a tremendous amount of literature and watched a lot of documentations». He revived old contacts and made new ones and soon noticed that the subject was discriminated in the usual TV documentation logic. «This doesn't do justice to the matter», he says about those productions with only a couple of days to shoot, limited budgets and only a handful of locations. After he handed in the script, at first, he heard nothing from Krassnitzer. Then he made a decision that proved to be essential for the film. «I decided to do it myself.» This did not mean only that take on responsibility for content but to newly learn practically everything. First, he asked a Romanian friend to film scenes with shepherds. But the project dragged on and the friend quit after a while. Aigner was forced to take up the camera himself. He learned filming at the shepherds, practiced drone-flying and got a permit to do so, and he worked on his imagery language and technique – so the movie has grown into more than just an idea – it is a life project.

16 Countries Travelled

This story explains Aigner's attitude. The film is not a monetary venture. «I financed it from my own means, since the money I have today I owe somehow to wool. It's only fair that a part of it will benefit sheep and wool – in the shape of this film.» His aim is wide distribution, not revenues. «I want the film to be watched, I want it to reach a wide audience...and most ideally, I would like for one or the other to change her or his mind and to act.»

~ The documentation is called: «Der Mensch, die Wolle, das Schaf (Man, Wool, Sheep)». He travelled 16 countries for it,

and he not only interviewed shepherds and shepherdesses, but also craftspeople, scientists, workers in small spinning factories, collecting initiatives and design or industrial experts. «Nobody really seems to realize how little wool is put to use and what huge amounts get thrown away.» «Only a tiny minority in Europe» is aware of the issue. Walter Aigner wants to emphasize especially to the fact how little use wool finds nowadays, when synthetic products are so much cheaper. «The prices for synthetic products do not include later cost such for dealing with micro plastics, unsolved problems of disposal or environmental damage», Aigner points out. The public needs a new awareness.

The Future of Sheep Keeping

As to content, the film takes us right in the middle of the work and the daily reality of shepherding. In Rumania, Aigner accompanies, amongst others, shepherds like Adrian and shows transhumance as a complex system of knowledge, rhythm and hard work. At the same time, conflicts become visible: little estimation, bureaucratic hurdles, political instability. Aigner describes a dire future for them: «I see the future of sheep keeping really endangered», and he warns of a «irreplaceable loss for Europe and our quality of life.» Because many landscapes that we perceive as natural are in reality cultured landscapes, due to grazing animals. Unlike, but true: the institutions that keep shepherds from letting their flocks graze are the ones that are most concerned with the protection of nature. The film is supposed to last for an hour. He views distribution as a journey: showings for interested parties, of course on TV or at festivals. It wants to speak to people who watch it together and probably discuss it further. After it is finished, he wants to take two years off to carry it into every corner of Europe. His project is not only a mere documentation of a vanishing craft but also a movement: An urge to give sheep, wool and the people who tend to them also a deserved presence in our days and times – before all knowledge, practice and the landscapes they conserved will have vanished entirely.

After 5 years, the German premiere of the documentation «Die WOLLE der MENSCH das SCHAF» by Walter Aigner will take place on February 28th 2026 in Kassel. Trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kXg3bAAbrWY>

PAGES 56-59

Learning From the Sheep: Educational Training Between Pasture and Wool

In the beginning, wool and its structure, its characteristics and the question how different wool qualities react was an object of prolonged study for the feltmaker Yasmin Groß-Stellmach. This intense research marked the beginning of her own project: becoming a sheep keeper herself and to enter into educationally related work.

Her professional career is a bit rocky but follows an inner logic of its own. A hairdresser by training, she later worked as a book seller. Fifteen years ago, Yasmin Groß-Stellmach discovered feltmaking. «I knew immediately that this craft would stick with me», the 38-year-old artist says. Since 2014, she works part time as a self-employed artist, holds courses and deepened her knowledge and skills during an adult education program for a farm-event teacher. With her family, she lives in a renovated farm building from the 1950ies in Alsdorf-Haengen. There are also an old stable and a big piece of land where many different domesticated animals were kept. This former stable with a hayloft was to become her studio and working room for her felt and creative decoration work. Most important, she is the mother of a six-year-old daughter and of twin boys of two-and-a-half years of age.

Working With Wool

From start, she studied technique, material and design. Creative impulses came from workshops with renowned felters such as Inge Bauer, Charity van der Meer or Annemie Koenen. Her brand signature are wool curls that she cleans and dyes herself in order to warrant great quality. Those curls find their way to clothing and objects, preferably of large-sized formats, that leave room for material experiments and creative decisions. She collected almost every available kind of wool and made herself a voluminous felt book with samples – a personal kind of dictionary that documents until today how different kinds of wool respond to treatment and for what they can be safely used.

From Material to the Animal

Studying the different kinds of sheep and their different wool led her to

raw wool and eventually to the sheep itself. Groß-Stellmach found out that the wool of certain races is hardly ever processed further. She began to work with shorn wool, preferably with those of Wensleydale Longwools or Teeswater Sheep. During that time, she made a lot of her so-called «veggie furs» and curly collars. Those works paved the way for her dream: her own providers of wool. At first there were only six, four black Wensleydale Longwools and two grey Zackel Sheep, but the flock grew steadily and counts now 40. Her focus today is on the Wensleydale Longwools, English Teeswater, Leicester Longwools and one remaining Zackel. «When I learned I would give birth to twins, I had to reduce the flock», Groß-Stellmach reports. But in 2026, there will be a good season for lambing.

Responsibility and Educational Training

She takes care of her animals herself, without any machines. The shearing and the care of claws she carries out on her own, and when the ewes give birth, she delivers the lambs. Keeping wool sheep is very demanding: They need highly nutritious pastures, dry pens, a strictly allotted winter feeding and on the whole, high-quality feed. Especially when it comes to hay, you need to take extra care to achieve clean wool after the shearing. Next to marketing wool and sheep she offers sponsorship for sheep, meetings and invitations to sheep picknicks. But the focus has been turning more and more towards education. She wants to show city youngsters and country kids what it means to keep animals and to take on responsibility for them. «Many kids have already lost touch with nature or didn't have the chance to do so to begin with. Here I come into play. This kind of work is dear to my heart», she says. «Whether families come to see me in my fruit orchard and rejoice in the variety of animals, wool and landscape, or whether I visit institutions like schools with chosen animals, especially where kids from less fortunate social backgrounds never experience such things. My aim is to share this world. Honestly, authentically and with full respect for the animals, this material and mankind as a whole.» A great part of her energy goes to enlarging the so-called «educational garden» called Wurzel Wald (Root Forest) where she plans and develops events around the subjects nature, garden and food produce.

Attitude and a Glimpse of the Future

Now, her days are determined by many projects and also some obstacles. Yasmin Groß-Stellmach's life philosophy bases on the conviction that each experience makes sense in hindsight. This attitude is mirrored by her treatment of materials: She closely avoids throwing wool away but is always on the lookout for different, further use. For the future, she wishes to continue to make a living from the issues she cherishes most: share her passions, pass on what you know and to kindle enthusiasm for nature itself, domesticated animals and handicraft.

DIANA PYTER

Please find more information regarding sheep keeping, wool and educational trainings about sheep and wool under Website: lafieri.de

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International Felters' Meeting in Izmir

The international felters' meeting was held in Izmir from October 16th to 21st 2025. This coastal city with its sunny climate and the charming surroundings was the ideal place. The host was the Anelsander Anatolian Folk Art Organization, and the manager Ugur Türker had compiled a diversified six-day program.

In the limelight were mostly felt masters from Turkey with their own workshops. Among them, especially the two-day presentation by the internationally famous felt master Mehmet Gircic stood out. His son Salih took part as well. After bathing, he dyed the yarn he had brought along with dyer's madder and dyer's weed. Another event was a day full of exhibitions with openings and viewings.

Expert Talk and Workshop Practice

The exhibition day was followed by a day of lectures by art historians, ethnologists and archeologists. Their presentations were enhanced by well chosen, rich imagery. There was also a day excursion to the countryside, e.g. to Tire, where traditional felt masters, their workshops and architectural remains from Roman

times could be visited. In the evenings, there were documentations concerning felt art. Each day, one to two hours were provided where exhibitors explained special techniques and work methods from their countries of origin.

International Encounters

In focus was the exchange of experiences and skills. This was made possible because all scheduled events could be followed in Turkish, Russian or English. The translator Aigul Hasimzade, who is a felt artist herself, perfectly mastered the terminology. 25 artists from Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, Poland, Turkey, Hungary and Ingushetia. From the Altai republic came Olga Savatova who presented the popular technique of natural prints on silk and felt.

Ancient Felt Carpets from Ingushetia

The participants from Ingushetia brought extensive literature which is quite unfamiliar outside of their region. The felted carpets made there consist of several parts that were sewn together. The seams are adorned with a kind of cord. The carpets are relatively thin, since they have no felted back layer. They brought a colorful carpet from the early 20th century. Ingushetia is on the northern side of the Caucasus between North Ossetia and Chechnya, embedded in a mountainous region with heights from 2000 to 3000 meters.

A Day of Studies in Tire

The visit of a traditional Turkish feltmaking company was the highlight for many. These workshops can be found in the half-roofed bazar in the center of the town and serve also as sales rooms. The brightly colored shop window of master Arif Çön, who took part at the meeting as well, was most impressive. Together with his daughter he makes traditional felt products like carpets, rugs, coats, sweat coats and recently also square sitting mats. He is open for new techniques developed in Europe and offers a great choice of felted scarves, vests, jackets and pieces of cloth.

Museum and Exhibitions

The visit of the town museum was worthwhile. The museum's director, Ali Özcelik, led the group around the exhibition rooms and explained the concept. The crafts were not only shown as objects but also performed. A good example was the linen weaving manufacture with six spindles, a basket

weaving venture and a rope factory. Also quilting and saddlery were demonstrated. A musician with a knee fiddle accompanied the round tour and added to the jolly atmosphere. Another highlight was a visit to Ephesus, an important city of the ancient Roman Empire.

~ The organizers of the meeting had asked the participants to bring along objects for three different shows. The first exhibit presented the traditional felted objects of the respective countries. The second show dealt with possibilities regarding a renewal of certain traditions. For the third show, the organizers asked each person to make a felted blanket measuring 70 cm x 100 cm with a tree of life as motif. This was especially interesting, since the similarities and differences of the felt art tradition of different countries could be easily compared. A Kazakh artist showed a symbolic tree of life based on traditional motifs, but her interpretation was free and individually interpreted.

~ By chance, her silhouette appears on the photograph – a detail that adds to the impression. We think that this photograph properly depicts the meeting. In Central Asia, feltmaking is a female craft. Whereas the Turkish masters usually work together in groups of three and concentrate on selling their produce, women in Central Asia usually think of their own family members for whom they make clothes and objects, therefore designing them with a different, more personal and loving touch.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDAK

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Wollkarderei Ursula Jaton · Degenmattstr. 68
CH-4421 St. Pantaleon · Suisse
Tel. (0041) 619131333
www.atelier-pecora.ch · atelier-pecora@gmx.ch

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de;
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