

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #91, Summer 2026

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Dear readers

Summer is the time of travelling, of discovery and reaching desired destinations. The themes we tackle in this issue mirror exactly that: The search for a place that is more than a geographical site. A kind of inner home, expressed by felting.

Consequently, we will meet artists whose ways cover continents but still run together in something familiar. Take for example Katerina Korshun who went from Kazakhstan to Italy and found a universal home in nature – a source that runs right into her work (p. 24-29) Vera Alexandrova as well left Moscow and found a new home in Sydney, where she developed her own language of forms: wearable felt art, seamlessly thought out and transposed. (p. 30-33)

For other feltmakers, their journey begins from within. Alexandra Kazmierczak describes feltmaking as a way back to herself – as a new beginning that surpasses any notions of material (p. 46-49) Dianne Randle transforms wool into landscapes, where she fixes both memories and places (p. 38-41) In Yorkshire, Sarah Lyle combines felt, fabrics and embroidery to form an artistic landscape of her own. (p. 50-53)

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.

Yet, our present issue does not only tell of individual ways but also of those of community and teaching. Julia Struzh is opening realms of learning with her Felting Academy (p. 12-15), while projects like „Felting for the operation room“ show how the craft can actually be used supportively in lesser-known areas (p.54-55). The Alpaca Meadow Blumrich is living proof how close-knit nature, meeting and craft are. (p. 56-57) Tradition and the present continue to merge, so for instance in the report about the horse blanket Partschi or in the „Fat Ladies“ course and as well as in the Indian project that puts Kyrgyz felt art in a contemporary context. (p. 18 ff.) The Felting Encounter in Chemnitz follows that idea as well – to render invisible things visible. (as of p. 8 ff.) And maybe this is exactly what feltmaking is all about. The craft combines fibers, people and stories. It keeps things in motion. In that sense, we invite you to a certain flow – right through this summer issue, touching ideas, places and different sources of inspiration. It may very well be that you will find your personal, creative home base.

Have fun!
Your *filzfun* Team

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Well-Founded Feltmaking Training

Hosted by Michaela Kunzfeld, a thorough feltmaking training will take part in Leibnitz, Austria, from August 20th to 23rd 2026. The mottos are «Kugel, Schnur, Fläche (Sphere, String and Surface)» and «Dreidimensionales Filzen (3 D feltmaking)» and in both courses you will learn and deepen basic felting techniques. The 4-day-training is aimed not only at teachers and therapists, but to each and everybody who shares interest and joy in felting. The overall approach is to understand the felting process, to detect mistakes on time and to choose the appropriate material for each project. The first part focuses on basic techniques which already allow for many kinds of applications. The second part is dedicated to felting hollow bodies with the help of resists, such as bowls, bags or lamps. Additionally, the participants will learn about various design elements, such as color gradients, decorative fibers and surface effects. Important aspects, like material knowledge, correct ways to lay out wool as well as the calculation of shrinking factors will be discussed in order to achieve long-lived and high-quality results. Site: Bildungshaus Schloss Retzhof near Leibnitz, Austria
Cost: € 390 course fee plus material (ca. € 50)
filz-kunzt.at

Sight is On Bags and Pouches

During this year's Felting Encounter in Chemnitz, Tanja Kahl and Steph Selke discovered the bag frames of a certain trader. This practical accessory enables you to make pouches and bags that, when opened, remain sturdily open. It does not only make it easier to see what is inside but also rummaging through it on a search for your mirror etc. Another great advantage: For fixing neither thread nor needle are required.

∞ The two felters decided to work with this exciting technique. On June 20th 26, you are invited to Tanja Kahl's Felt Art Workshop (Werkstatt FilzKunst) to felt pouches and bags with a bag frame and

the already familiar handles. In focus are experimenting, testing and talking shop in a relaxed atmosphere. Around lunchtime, a small, delicious buffet is waiting for you, where to each participant makes a small contribution.

Application: *info@filzkunst-tanjakahl.de* (Tanja Kahl) or *info@diefilzerei-naturpur.com* (Steph Selke)

Heavy Fabric: Women – Traditional Costumes – Life Stories

The special exhibit «Schwerer Stoff. Frauen – Trachten – Lebensgeschichten» will present textile highlights from the collection of the Danube-Swabian Central Museum Ulm at the Museum of European Cultures in Berlin. The show centers on dresses for women and girls from 1880 to 1990 which mirror the life world of female Danube-Swabians. These are an ethnical German minority that settled along the Danube in Hungary, Romania, Serbia and Croatia in the 18th century. The costumes presented, which sometimes had up to 15 single parts, offer a glimpse into personal histories and societal structures between tradition, religion and a multicultural everyday life. They show the close connection of dress and identity, from everyday wear to bridal gowns. The exhibits also deals with the history of the Danube Swabians in former Hungary and contemporary themes like cultural identity and textile upcycling. There are approx. 20 clothes assemblies with added photographs, drawings and other objects which show the proximity of memories, biographies and typical traditional clothing. The show invites you to discover a part of European history from a personal, female perspective. The thoroughly researched exhibition catalogue is bilingual and with many photographs and drawings.
smb.museum

Sharper than a Needle: Experimental Pop With Textile Machinery

The «Ensemble Dressed in Sound» is going to present the musical performance «Sharper Than a Needle» in the Therese-Giese-Hall of the Munich Kammerspiele on June 3rd 26. Afterwards, there will be a celebration of the vinyl album of the same name. The performance combines sound art, textile machines and queer-feministic discourses. Sewing and knitting machines and textile tools do not only function as instruments but as an artistic means of reflecting work, gender roles and societal structures. Initiated by Stephanie Müller and Klaus Erika Dietl, the project combines different artistic positions. Together with other contributors, impressive sound spaces, performative images and experimental stage installations are created. The production is an open stage concept with parallel stations – from sewing machine choruses via textile sound objects to performative interactions with the machinery. Visual elements such as video mapping or close-ups enhance the show and render processes of sound origins visible. As to its subject, the show oscillates between art, handicraft and political practice. Textile work is seen as a means of networking, as a collective strategy and a newly-interpreted artistic expression. The vinyl record is available in limited number. It was produced in co-operation with the sound artist Colin Djukic and comes with a magazine covering photos and background information.

*muenchner-kammerspiele.de/de/
programm/37763-sharper-than-a-needle*

Jubilee Exhibit: Felting For Nature

The Haus der Natur (House of Nature) celebrates its 30th anniversary, which was the reason to contract a felt art exhibition which will open on June 21st 26. The subjects wool, sheep and landscape have been in focus for the nature preserve Obere Donau for a long time. For centuries, sheep have been used for the husbandry of poorer pastures and even today society cannot do without

their contribution to the conservation and nurture of lesser profitable, extensive natural areas such as juniper heaths or calcareous low-nutrient meadows. The problem, however, lies in the fact that husbandry in those areas is no longer economically viable without financial governmental support. Therefore, the Haus der Natur has been supporting the initiative «Beuron Felt». Its main purpose is to bring the importance of this matter back to mind for locals and visitors alike. 25 objects made by felt artist all over Germany were chosen to be presented around the old station building. In addition to the exhibition there will be a framing program regarding sheep and wool, which consists of lectures, guided tours and felting courses.
naturpark-obere-donau.de

PAGES 8-11

Felting Encounter in Chemnitz «Ungesehenes sichtbar machen (To Render the Unseen Visible)»

When felters travel, then rarely with light luggage. You can tell them from afar: women with heavy backpacks and bags full of wool. In February 2026, their way led them to Chemnitz, the European Cultural Capital of 2026. For four days, the city's youth hostel turned into a meeting point for feltmakers from Germany, Austria, South Tyrol and The Netherlands.

The opening was, as usual, the members' meeting which offered a glance back to a lively year in the Filznetzwerk with projects, regional encounters and communal actions. At the same time, the future was naturally an issue as well – e.g. the Filzkolleg in Soltau and generally about new ideas. It became again obvious what keeps the Network together – it thrives on participation, commitment and being prepared to share knowledge and experience. The so-called impulse workshops tackled the annual theme «To Render the Unseen Visible». In «Felt & Graffiti» expressive objects were made with clear lines and freely designed color areas. «Silberlocke (Silver Curl)» was inspired by the

minerals of the Ore Mountains. Small objects with silvery structures running through were made of raw wool curls and carded wool.

☞ During «Geheimnisse unter der Oberfläche (Secrets below the Surface)», colored wool was first hidden and later uncovered, which made for a surprising depth of lines and areas. The workshop «Bindung (Ties)» covered historic textile techniques and researched new felted surfaces. In a course called «Kleine Kostbarkeiten (Small Precious Things)» pearls, beads and pieces of jewelry were worked into the material and rendered visible again after felting was completed. «Verborgene Spitzen (Hidden Lace)» bridged Saxon textile history with delicate elements from wool and silk. Apart from the workshops, there was enough time for free feltmaking and happy exchanges that arose amongst water and wool.

☞ The local wool traders were open for spontaneous discoveries of materials which could be tested on the spot. Chemnitz itself was part of the program. A guided city tour offered fresh perspectives on a changing region. Industrial history, decampment and culture offered the background and mirrored this year's theme. The members' exhibition on Friday was especially touching. Objects that probably had never left a studio were given space and appreciation. The issue was visibility, not comparisons of any kind.

Communal Work and Fashion Show

The program was further enhanced by a range of project presentations. The association «Alte Spinnerei und Tuchfabrik Lengenfeld (Old Spinning and Cloth Factory Lengenfeld)» allowed for glimpses into its commitment to preserve textile industrial culture and the promotion of regional sheep wool. It became clear how closely connected handicraft, history and contemporary issues are. The cultural capital project «Vogelperspektive (Bird's Perspective)» presented a big communal project, showing impressions of Chemnitz on a felted carpet. Many contributions turned into a whole – a visible sign how powerful communal work can be. Saturday evening was a special highlight, felted favorite clothing being modeled in a show. The garments, which took many, many hours to make, were donned with pride and made visible. Again, perfection was not the issue, but expression and the courage to show

one's own designs. Each garment was met with generous applause, the faces full of excitement and joy. At the end of those four days, the notebooks were as full as the hearts. The Felting Encounter in the Filznetzwerk is more than just a German felters' meeting. It is a space for development, exchange and connection – in short, a place where the invisible becomes visible – regarding both the material and the stimulation of being together. The next Felting Encounter in the Feltnetwork is scheduled for February 2027 in Hohebuch. Maybe it is a fine occasion to make yourself the gift of being a member of this circle.

INA BIRKE

Website: *filznetzwerk.de*

PAGES 12-15

«I want to reach absolute beginners»

For the felt artist Julia Struzh, feltmaking means more than just a handicraft – it is an interplay between structure, intuition and experience. Over the years, the artist from Cologne has developed her own, sophisticated technique. Her way of presenting it pleases both children and adults. Now she teaches online courses at the Felting Academy with the aim of sharing her enthusiasm with many more people.

On the Felting Academy's online platform, Julia Struzh presents the most important feltmaking techniques and her design ideas concerning wool and fibers in elaborate video tutorials. The Felting Academy is not only a platform to learn and teach, but a creative space where felt artists of different levels come together to research wool characteristics, to broaden their knowledge and experience and to artistically express themselves. For the *filzfun*, Alena Sturz talks to Julia about her pathway to making felt art, her passion for the material and her online courses at the Felting Academy.

Julia, you studied Mathematics – how and why does this correspond to your feltmaking?

As far as I am concerned, felting is initially just logic. Despite its

being a creative process there is a clear step by step method and thus combines handicrafts and design. The mathematical logic, striving for efficiency and realizing how things in different contexts depend on each other are of great help. Admittedly, I am rather lazy when it comes to physical labor – and felting, after all, is exactly that. I wanted to develop techniques which offer great results by economizing on physical effort. ♡ Math helps me to distinguish structures and to pass this knowledge on in a way that is easily understood. I do not only felt, I teach, too. Experience is so important. Every work piece teaches me something new. Felting always remains an adventure. We work with natural materials, wool, silk and fibers, and water, soap, temperature and your own personal mood are added. Even if you repeat exactly the same as before, the outcome can be totally different. This is why I do not only explain the technique during my lectures but also the beauty of such a creative chaos.

When did you start feltmaking?

A friend from university had told me that feltmaking was currently in high esteem and she said even then: «This fits your personality.» In 2010, I finally tried it out. First in a small workshop, then in an intensive course held by Nina Demidova. Our meeting turned into a friendship. I lack the classical training, so I found out many things on my own. As a translator I accompany courses and workshops of experienced felters and I watch closely how different people use the same techniques. You could say that my way represents a mixture of inspiration from different sources and extensive, also self-taught, practice.

You often meet students who hold wool in their hands for the first time. How does that strike you?

For some years now, I have been teaching children on a regular basis. I used to think that there was an unsurmountable borderline between adult workshops and teaching children. But this is not true. With grown-ups, you experience the process together. Children react more spontaneously; within seconds their skepticism turns into enthusiasm. If you catch precisely this moment, it feels as if you have climbed a mountain and are standing on the top. I work at a school for students with special requirements. Once, I taught a boy who was rather difficult to handle. He worked with high

concentration and felted a perfect little tree. When it was finished, he wanted to send his Mum a picture of it. The teacher had tears in her eyes. These are deeply touching moments. At craft fairs as well, there are magic moments. A person who never had any feltmaking experience finds an object, tries it out or on and suddenly feels: «This is mine, it belongs to me.» Then I know that every energy I have put into the object is acknowledged.

And now you tackle the Internet – where do you see the potential?

Our everyday lives have accelerated considerably; it is difficult to plan courses over several days. Online means freedom: to work from home, at your own leisurely pace. I especially would like to reach those who have had no prior felting experience and teach them that it isn't hard to do. There are frustrating moments in learning a handicraft, so I offer understanding and support. Regarding skilled felters, I want to provide them with little «pearls» so they may reach the next step fast. Felting brings individuality into life: Choosing the colors, developing the forms and shapes, to make something yourself from A to Z and be proud of the result. Of course, there is not that one and only course for everybody. But I am always open for questions, feedback and exchange in Q & A videos. It would be great to inspire as many people as possible and to convey the courage that it is worthwhile to start something new.

INTERVIEW: ALENA STRUZH
TEXT: LARA PYTER

Those who want to learn more about Julia Struzh's way of working will currently find three online courses on the Felting Academy platform

- ♡ **Chic Transformer Shawl**, an introduction to Julia's main techniques by making a light scarf
- ♡ **A Versatile Vest** about the principles of felting clothes
- ♡ **Felt Design: Inspiration and Choice of Material**, a course about design ideas, choice of material and the planning of your own felting concepts and projects

All courses are self-paced – i.e. all participants work at their own leisure. You can always revert to former single lessons, Julia's tutorials are to be had in

German and English and the platform is being constantly developed further.

Felting Academy

The Felting Academy is an online platform for creative learning that specializes in the art of wet-felting. The step-by-step video tutorials are hosted by well-known felting experts: amongst others, May Hvistendahl, Sigrid Banner, Katerina Korshun, Julia Struzh, Alisa Bordo, Svetlana Fomina und Svetlana Bolikh. Each shares her own vision and masterly skill. The focus is on innovative techniques that have been developed in the last two decades in Russia and the Ukraine -- methods that newly define artistic feltmaking as modern, expressive and wearable art forms. Regardless whether sculptural hats, felted lamps, floral stoles or structured accessories are made – all courses combine tradition with contemporary design. Please find further information regarding Julia's tutorials and access to the courses under felting-academy.com/julia-struzh

PAGES 16-17

Fat Felted Ladies

In the beautiful Odenwald in the Gorbheimer valley, the felting course «Fat Ladies» hosted by Tanja Kahl took place in January 2026. This weekend was more than just working creatively with wool. The lecturer reports on those special days:

Due to illness, there remained only two participants in the end, which made the atmosphere really intimate, almost like a private session. This allowed for animated talk, the sharing of skills and a lot of laughter – but also for focused, quiet work. For me, the «Fat Ladies» embody joy of living, femininity, self-confidence and the right to take up space. The most important message, however, is clear: There is no perfect body. Each body is unique and the same applies to the figurines. Each lady is an individual. Sometimes with open arms, sometimes standing firm, playful and sensual. None is like the other, which is intended. Like in real life, beauty lies in the difference – of the curves, posture and expression. Next to feltmaking, we talked a lot, honestly, verging on personal confessions, deep yet keeping it light. We talked about body images, changes and

ways of life and we laughed and listened. The food and drinks were good and the overall impression was that of being safe.

Creativity, Body Diversity and a Personal New Start

In my recollection, this course was an important step. After my own personal physical change, it had taken me quite a while to take the subject «Fat Ladies» up again. It felt strange, as if it didn't properly belong to me anymore. Still, during the course I could not help but feel: These figures have nothing to do with weight, they deal with inner grandeur, acceptance and the zest for life. While working, I realized quickly: The technique is here, joy too – and this overwhelming feeling to have finally arrived again. At myself. This course reminded me why I do what I do. And why the «Fat Ladies» will continue to occupy space in my assortment of created objects. Creativity can heal and sometimes you have to come back to your old ways to realize how they still matter and belong to you.

TANJA KAHL

More information

In 2015, Tanja Kahl started training as a felt designer and graduated in 2018. She keeps being fascinated anew by the many different ways to work with wool. She made hats, bags, shawls, shoes and last but not least she hosted the course «Dicke Damen», the Fat Ladies. Please find more information about Tanja Kahl and her courses under Email: info@fikzkunst-tanja-kahl.de Website: filzkunst-tanja-kahl.de

PAGES 18-20

The Art of the Shyrdak

In November 2025, the Werenzia farm, renowned for creative cultural workshops, offered a special course: The art of making Shyrdak, which is a traditional Kyrgyz felting technique. It was held by the experienced textile artist Asel Sapakova and the German felting expert Sabine Reichert-Kassube. The participants were introduced to the fascinating world of Central-Asian textile art. The felter Anke Leuken reports:

On a cold day in November, I arrive at the Werenzia farm in the South

of Brandenburg. The air is clear, the landscape serene, and the old farm building looks bright and inviting. This weekend, however, is not meant for relaxation. Instead, we become acquainted with a century-old art form: the Shyrdak technique, a traditional felt art from Kyrgyzstan, which was given the title immaterial cultural heritage by the UNESCO in 2012. Upon reading the course offers I sensed that this would be an exceptional occasion. I simply had to take up the opportunity to learn such an ancient trade, deeply rooted in the Central Asian culture. And now I sat there, surrounded by wool in all colors and a group of creative people who were eager to delve into the Shyrdak universe.

The Soul of Kyrgyzstan in Felt

Shyrdaks are not merely rugs or carpets. They tell a story: each pattern, each symbol has a special meaning. The ram's horn is a sign of power, the tree of life stands for prosperity, growth and family, the eagle's wings as an expression of freedom. These symbols are deeply rooted in the Kyrgyz folklore and are handed down in the shape of artistic objects from generation to generation. Our tutor Asel Sapakova is a master carpet maker. She continues the family traditions in the fourth generation now and runs a small felting manufacturing plant in Bischkek. With her quiet yet passionate ways she not only taught us the technique but also the meaning and soul of this art. «The Shyrdak is not only a carpet», she explained, «but an expression of identity, community and history.»

From Ideas to Art Objects

The course began with an introduction of the symbolism and design of the Shyrdaks. Asel had brought books and patterns from Kyrgyzstan which were of great inspirational value. Together we sketched our first designs, some classical, others modern. We sketched eagles, butterflies, rams' horns and even a camel. «Dare to try something new», Asel encouraged us. «Shyrdaks can be modern, too. Tell your own story!» Then we started working in earnest. We made two sturdy felt plates from sheep wool in contrasting colors. That was quite a challenge, since the wool had to be distributed evenly and carefully. Then we drew our respective patterns onto the plates, cut them out and inserted the parts in the differently-colored, other plate – a process that required precision and patience.

The Magic of Details

That was only the beginning. The cut-out patterns were sewed up, a second felt layer was put behind them and decorated with cords. Here the true artistry of Shyrdak-making became obvious: The cords or strings framing the patterns render the carpet's characteristic structure and depth. One participant tried a particular classical, symmetrical ornament, a truly difficult task that she mastered with a great amount of patience. Others decided on freer forms and experimented with colors and materials. Especially exciting was the string technique in two colors, where two differently colored cords were used to make the play of color even more vivid.

Community and Indulgence

While working, a certain special atmosphere reigned. We listened to Kyrgyz music and stories and indulged in the wonderful meals that Asel and Sabine had prepared for us. At the end of the weekend, we not only made beautiful Shyrdaks, but were able to understand the culture and symbolism of Kyrgyzstan a lot better.

A Piece of Kyrgyzstan for Home

When I held my Shyrdak in hand on Sunday evening, I felt deeply satisfied. It wasn't perfect – some linings were a little crooked and the cords could have been more defined in certain areas. But this was entirely irrelevant. This Shyrdak was mine, my story and it would always remind me of this weekend. The course at the Werenzia farm was so much more than an introduction to the Shyrdak technique. It was a journey to a far-away living culture, an encounter with inspiring people and a great opportunity to rediscover one's creativity.

ANKE LEUKEN

The Werenzia Farm

At the Werenzia farm art, nature, handicraft and community combine in a very special way. The felt artist Sabine Reichert-Kassube has lovingly renovated the farm which is surrounded by elder and willow trees, frogs and ducks. Many felting courses are held there where the students can learn new techniques. The wildly romantic place itself is an inspiration for simplicity and is the ideal starting point for visions, devotion and manual crafts. arachne-textilkunst.de

Tutorial: Felted Cushion «Flowerbed»

This felted cushion with blossoms brings the beauty of nature directly into your home. Delicate shapes, soft materials and lovingly made details make each one a unique home decoration.

Material:

- ~ 250 to 350 g felting wool in the desired colors (both for the cushion and the flowers or blossoms)
- ~ Olive or curd soap
- ~ Warm water
- ~ Bubble wrap or bamboo mat
- ~ Towel
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Felting Needle
- ~ Optional: Dish for plants
- ~ Needle
- ~ Thicker thread
- ~ Felting mat

Instructions:

1 Preparation: Spread the bubble wrap onto the mat and place a round resist under it. Put on the first layer of felting wool evenly in one direction.

2 Then put another wool layer crosswise onto it to make the cushion sturdier. It also helps the fibers to merge properly.

3 Depending on how thick the cushion should be, you can lay out further layers – here we used five. Plan for 25 to 30 % more due to the shrinkage during wet-felting. For wet-felting, put the laid-wool in the plant dish or simply leave it on the bubble wrap.

4 Then the flowers are made: Form little blossoms and leaves from colored wool and place them onto the uppermost layer.

5 Moisten the whole workpiece with warm soapy water, carefully.

6 Felt them on with delicate circular movements. Once the fibers have connected you can use more pressure.

7 Now roll the work piece up the mat and full it until the felt is really stable.

8 Once the desired sturdiness is reached, rinse the cushion, pull it into shape and let it dry.

9 Then the flowers are finished with the needle.

10 Sew the edges up with overcast stitches.

INSTRUCTIONS: ESMA

More information

Esma is a creative Mum with a love for handicraft and natural materials. The social worker and kindergarten nurse has discovered felting for herself and her children and it has accompanied her life as a mother ever since. For Esma, feltmaking is more than just creative work – it is time spent together, attentiveness and connection. On Instagram, she shares her inspiration around feltmaking, creative projects with kids and fine DIY ideas for everyday life. Her work combines imagination and a great joy of doing things with her hands.

Instagram: [@frosch.und.schwan](https://www.instagram.com/frosch.und.schwan)

PAGES 26-29

«Textiles and Nature are Loves of Mine»

Katerina Korshun is a fashion designer and artist from Kazakhstan whose life and work are closely connected to nature and textiles. She grew up in Kazakhstan in a family of artists and as long as she can remember, she has always been creating something. Today she lives in Italy with her husband and works in her studio that she fondly calls «my wool realm».

The artist has always spent a lot of time reading books, observing nature and starting from early on she was forever drawing, crafting and inventing. «One half of my heart is made of felt, the other is woven from thin twigs and blades of grass. Textiles and nature have been by love and inspiration throughout my life», Katerina Korshun says. Her greatest treasure was a large travel bag

filled with colored scraps of fabric. Her mother sewed clothes for her and her sister, and Katerina sewed dresses for her doll. By the time she had reached secondary school, she had become the leading fashionista: Korshun sewed her own clothes and always knew she would be a fashion designer, like her mother. It took five years of art school and admission to the university in Vitebsk her dream came true: At the age of 17, she left Kazakhstan for Belarus, where her independent life began.

From Fashion Design to Felt Art

Her student years had been full of creativity, but working in the fashion industry turned out to be a disappointment. «I did not find freedom of self-expression in fashion and felt constrained by the canons of sewing technology and market demands», the artist remembers. Only in 2009, after having moved to Prague, she found new artistic freedom in feltmaking. «I fell in love with wool – its malleability, warmth, and endless possibilities.» She worked on her expertise and studied felting techniques, experimented with textures, mixing wool with other materials. «I combined my discoveries in felting with my experiences in fashion design to create clothing and accessories». In 2014, she founded the «School of Modern Felting», developed dozens of video courses and has been teaching about four thousand students so far.

Nature as a Universal Home

In 2021, Katerina Korshun moved to Italy. Here she has a new family, a new home and a spacious laboratory where she continues to experiment with her favorite material. Nature plays a crucial role in her life. Reflecting on her many relocations, she realized that she had never felt completely at home, neither in society nor in an urban environment. Yet she has always found comfort in nature. No matter where: in the steppes of Kazakhstan, the forests of Belarus, the Czech mountains or a glacier in Italy – she always feels then like she is «in her place». «Two years ago, I felt that I wanted to grow as an artist and that my experience with felt would help me express what is important to me through art: memory, identity and the inseparable connection between humans and nature. This marked the beginning of a new chapter in my life. Both halves of my heart beat in unison, ready for new discoveries», the artist tells us.

Way of Working and Artistic Expression

She likes to plan her work beforehand, but gives herself the necessary time so that her ideas may ripen. «The ideas cluster around the door of my studio, knock and ask to be let in.» Currently, she is working at a series of soft wall hangings dealing with her memories and experiences of her many moves. This is her way to find out who she really is and where she comes from.

☞ Katerina Korshun's art is based on the search to find connections between natural phenomena and the inner world of man. She works abstractly and uses symbols and long brush strokes, similar to the impressionists. She works in large-sized and prefers rich, tactile surfaces. «I want my work to open space for deep contemplation and emotional recreation. The spectator is invited to let loose a bit and to take some time off the everyday hustle and bustle.» The felt artist loves natural colors and monochromia. She often uses scraps from wool and mohair production plants in order to give those noble materials the deserved esteem.

A Special Art Object – Focus Inward

Her art work «Focus Inward» is one of her most interesting and also most time-consuming projects. For the inner parts of the felted roots, she used white carded Merino as well as scraps from white wool of different quality. She felted 14 ramified roots, one at a time. Then these were fastened with felting needles on a previously prepared felt mat. The whole workpiece was thickened with water and soap. Rinsing the soap turned out rather tricky. Luckily it was summer and she could use a hose. «I crawled on my knees and pressed the felt down to get rid of the soap suds. The hot Italian sun helped me to dry my object», she says with a laugh. Her efforts paid, because «Focus Inward» became part of the 13th International Fiber Art Biennial «From Lausanne to Beijing».

LARA PYTER

More information

The felt artist takes part in art shows in Italy and abroad on a regular basis. With her objects, she invites the spectators to pause for a moment, to listen to their own needs and to find themselves anew. Felt art gives her a lot of room for discoveries and experiments, all of which are pure inspiration for her.

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

Website: <https://katerinakorshun.art>

PAGE 30-33

«It Feels Like Pure Magic»

Vera Alexanderova's life journey spans from Moscow's frosty winters to the sun-drenched coast of Sydney. The 53-year-old fashion designer and felt artist creates seamless wearable objects, where traditional techniques and a contemporary language of forms combine in a special way.

Long before Vera Alexanderova tried first her hand at felting in 1998, textile art had already been a big part of her life. She was experienced in various textile techniques such as sewing, knitting, embroidery, macramé or painting on silk. Her encounter with felting happened around twenty years ago – and it changed everything. Once she saw a friend working with loose wool and transforming it into a delicate and expressive object, using only a needle. She was immediately hooked: «It felt like pure magic.» When the friend told her that this technique was called needle-felting, she immediately began researching and realized within soon that she «had discovered a veritable treasure.»

A New Artistic Direction

Although she is largely self-taught in felting, her education as a fashion designer in Moscow helped her enormously. Pattern, construction and form were intuitively understood. At that time, she was living in Moscow and her first felted works were dense and sculptural. The cold climate naturally led to creating warm, protective garments. She began making seamless felt coats, where the form emerged directly through the felting process. After moving to Sydney, her work took an entirely new direction. Light, climate and the rhythm of life inspired her to explore lightness, movement and transparency. She began to work actively with natural silks, developing extremely thin, flowing felt. Today, she is able to create virtually any garment without the use of seams «from the lightest, flowing dress to an extravagant coat.» She also began working on large-scale felt wall panels, another exciting direction in her artistic practice. The richness and diversity of Australian nature constantly inspire her: «I never lack ideas – the only real limitation is time.»

Materials, Color and Technique as Artistic Language

In the center of her work is the use of Australian Merino. She carefully selects the fiber fineness in order to achieve different effects – ranging from dense, architectural forms to delicate and flexible surfaces. Almost always, she combines wool with natural silk like Margilan, Pongé or Organza. In addition, various fibers, yarns and curls are used to enrich surface texture and visual depth. All materials except the wool are dyed by herself, as color plays a central role in her work. Over the years, she has developed many techniques of her own to explore new relationships between material, form and color. She is not interested in repeating effects, instead, she focuses on continual process. Despite of using some modern tools, the manual work remains crucial. «Hands remain the most essential instrument in felting». A fundamental principle of her practice is the refusal to use sewing. «To felt and not to sew» is a defining feature of her artistic language. Complex garments are felted entirely during the felting process – she even developed several techniques to create entirely seamless armholes.

International Renown and Teaching of knowledge

Her art objects have been shown in several single shows and have been published in professional textile and felting magazines. Especially important was her participation in the Royal Easter Show in Australia, which happened twice already. On both occasion she was awarded the «Standard of Excellence». Next to her art, she actively teaches her techniques and approach to fashion design. Recently, she has begun developing online workshops allowing her to work with students from different countries.

Feltmaking as a Life Philosophy

For Vera Alexanderova, felting is much more than a technique. It is an expression of her attitude towards life and work. «I live for the opportunity to create and invent», she describes her motivation. Repeating what she has already done is not in her interest, instead she is driven by continuous exploration and discovery. It is not the final result that matters most, but the process itself. «Felting is not just a technique for me, but a way of life». Much like the path of the Samurai, she says – characterized by discipline, concentration and the state of deep immersion in work.

LARA PYTER

More information

The Sydney-bound artist has been travelling a lot in order to familiarize herself with traditional techniques in a cultural context. Her research, travel and experience with nomads in Central Asia and Mongolia have convinced her that wool has an enormous potential as an important raw material. After she had learned of the origin and the rich history of feltmaking. Once the process was fully understood and the great variety of raw wool finally realized, she devoted her work fully to feltmaking. According to her, this material provides her with countless possibilities with regard to color and form.

alexanderova.com

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

Youtube: [@alexanderova_felt](https://www.youtube.com/@alexanderova_felt)

PAGES 34-39

Tutorial: Felted Bag with Decorative Cut-Out Design

This red felted bag is just eye candy, a combination of modern design and traditional craft art. The cut-outs make for an exciting interplay of form, color and structure.

Material:

- ~ 200 g Australian Merino wool
- ~ Decorative Silk Fibers (Viscose, silk threads, curls)
- ~ Sequins
- ~ Natural organza (approx. 40 × 20 cm)
- ~ Main bag resist
- ~ Additional small resist for inner pocket
- ~ Resist shapes for decorative cut-outs
- ~ Warm water and soap
- ~ Synthetic netting
- ~ Bubble wrap
- ~ Towel
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Bag handle

Instructions:

Preparing the Base

- 1 Put the main template on your working surface.

- 2 Lay the first wool layer horizontally, overlapping fibers by approx. 30 %. Allow the wool to extend beyond the edges. Add the second layer vertically.

- 3 Cover everything with netting, wet with warm water and smooth until perfectly flat.

Creating the Cut-Out Design

- 4 Remove the netting and position the small resist shapes where you want decorative openings.

- 5 Lay contrasting wool in selected areas.

- 6 Sprinkle sequins evenly

- 7 Cover the work piece with natural organza, allowing 2 – 3 cm overlap. Soap thoroughly.

- 8 Place the resist shapes back and continue. Add two more layers horizontally, then vertically.

- 9 Wet and smooth carefully.

- 10 Then add decorative fibers where desired. (Viscose, silk, curls)

- 11 Cover with netting, wet again and gentle massage.

- 12 Now turn the work over together with the template.

Making the Inner Pocket

- 13 Position the additional pocket resist.

- 14 Lay one horizontal and one vertical wool layer over it. Leave the pocket opening unsealed and reinforce the edge with a thin line of wool. Cover again with the main template.

Building the Second Side

- 15 Trim excess wool at the future handle area. Fold the bottom wool upward to form edges.

- 16 Repeat layering: horizontally, vertically, horizontally. Wet, soap and smooth. Fold top and side allowances neatly to shape the opening. Add decorative fibers if desired. The bag layout is now complete.

Felting Process

- 17 Wrap the template in plastic, roll it inside the bubble wrap and a towel. Roll approx. 50 times in one direction. Unroll, reshape and rotate.

- 18 Repeat from different directions (about four rolling cycles).

- 19 Rinse lightly, soap again and continue rolling – including from the inside.

- 20 Move to the fulling stage: gently throw and shape the bag until it reaches the desired density.

Opening and Finishing

- 21 After final rinsing, compare with the original template. Carefully locate the areas protected by resists and cut ONLY the top wool layer to create openings.

- 22 Then remove all resists.

- 23 Trim the edges, leaving 5-7 mm allowance.

- 24 Sew on the handle, if desired. The bag now features decorative cut-outs and a fully felted inner pocket.

INSTRUCTIONS: VERA ALEXANDEROVA

Please find more information about Vera as of page 30.

PAGES 40-43

Form and Presence Modelled by Nature

Dianne Randle, a textile artist from Norwich in Norfolk, Great Britain, is creating contemporary felted wall art and sculptural vessels. Her work explores natural forms and the tactile, expressive qualities of wool fibres, drawing inspiration from the natural world.

Central to Dianne's practice are her sculptural vessels. Their hollow forms and quiet physical presence evoke ocean-worn pebbles, rock pools and corals shaped by time. «I am fascinated by forms that have

been modelled by the course of time over many years and their inherent notions of power and transformation», she says. Her vessels suggest both strength and fragility, they echo the rhythms of the sea as well as the subtle beauty of erosion. No two pieces are ever the same. «The felting process always has an element of unpredictability», Dianne explains. «I begin with an idea in mind, but the material often leads me in a different direction.»

Painting with Fibres – Wall Art Full of Movement

Apart from vessels, she makes expressive felted wall art wherein she embraces vibrant colour and layered surface textures. She works with wool fibres much like paint and creates rich, fluid compositions. «I actually think like a painter when working», she tells us. «The fibres are serving as pigments.» Her objects make for a sense of movement, depth and atmosphere, reminiscent of tidal shifts and changing coastal light. Each piece is handmade using 100 % Merino wool, a natural and sustainable material. The shrinkage that occurs during felting enhances the sculptural qualities of the work, resulting in tactile surfaces and organic contours. Pieces are often worked into natural linen and framed in oak. «For me it is crucial that the materials used connect to the surrounding landscape», Dianne explains. «They should reflect the peace and natural beauty that I see outside.»

The Coastline as an Inspirational Source

Dianne studied Textile Design at Norwich University of the Arts and worked as an Art and Design teacher for 25 years. Now she is working full time as an artist. She lives in Norwich with her husband, their two children and their tabby cat near the expansive beaches of the Norfolk coast. «The coast is a constant source of inspiration», she says. «There I find forms, colors and structures that influence and motivate my art». Walking along the shoreline provide moments of quiet observation. She sketches vessel-like forms, studies sand patterns and rock pools and notes the shifting light on water. Pebbles and sea glass collected along the way often find their place in her studio – small, treasured reminders of time spent in nature.

A Creative Childhood

Creativity has been a constant companion of Dianne's life from a very early age. Her

mother made her clothes and taught her to embroider and knit, while her father helped her cast concrete for her studies. «My parents always encouraged me to «do what you love», she fondly remembers. «This gave me the trust and confidence to go my own way.» From the beginning, she was a self-taught felter, when she began to introduce this craft to her students. Soon, she discovered wool's creative potential. «Wool has a life of her own», she claims. «Wool fibres shrink and shift in unpredictable ways during the process, it requires you to respond intuitively.» It is exactly this dialogue with the material that remains one of the most exciting aspects of her art.

Between Studio and Kitchen

Drawing and painting continue to inform her artistic practice. She explores composition and colour-ways in sketchbooks. The fluid movement of ink mirrors the flow of water and influences the way she layers and blends fibres. Dianne works from a home studio where she paints, sketches and needle-felts, whereas wet-felting and sculpting take place mainly in her sunlit kitchen. For larger surfaces, she sometimes uses a Janome embellisher before refining a piece by hand with a fine gauge needle. One of her latest exhibitions is «Tactile» in the Gray Area Gallery in Norwich, which brought together four textile artists. The show challenged perceptions of textile as purely craft-based, highlighting their artistic and conceptual depth. «Textile art is often underrated», Dianne says. «But is just as expressive and complex as any other art form.»

LARA PYTER

More information

Dianne Randle is currently working at a new work series for the die Affordable Art Fair in Hampstead, London (May 6th.-10th. Mai 2026) und Battersea, London (October 14th.-18th. 2026), where her works are being presented by the Gray Area Gallery.
Website: diannerandle.co.uk and grayareagallery.co.uk
Instagram: [@diannetextileartist](https://www.instagram.com/diannetextileartist)

PAGES 44-47

Tutorial: A Practical Tiny Purse for Coins, Bills and Credit Cards

This tiny felted purse is a practical companion for each and every day. It is rather light yet compact and sturdy, A perfect container to stash coins, bills or credit cards.

Material:

- ~ Approx. 20 g Mountain Sheep Wool
- ~ Bubble wrap 22 cm x 24 cm with rounded edges
- ~ Bubble wrap 18.5 cm x 11 cm, rounded edges at one length only

Felting Equipment

- ~ Skidproof rubber pad
- ~ Scales
- ~ Water
- ~ Soap
- ~ Scissors
- ~ Felting pin
- ~ Universal pliers
- ~ Rubber gloves to protect the hands from hot water
- ~ Plastic card in credit card shape
- ~ Knitting needle
- ~ Razor
- ~ Needle
- ~ Basting thread
- ~ Matching sewing yarn
- ~ A matching zipper 14 cm long

Instructions:

1 Lay the wool out in four layers 3.5 g each on the template. Allow for excess of approx. 1 cm. (Two layers each for the front and two for the back.) The direction of the fibers should change from horizontal to vertical. For the credit card compartment lay out 2 g of wool on the resist in two layers, also with an excess of 1 cm and changing directions. If required, fill out thin areas with extra fibers.

2 Put the first two layers onto the skidproof rubber pad, wet them with water and pre-felt them, leaving out the edges.

3 Put the resist onto the middle of the felt piece and fold the edges over carefully.

- 4 Turn everything around and put on the other two layers, wet and pre-felt them.
- 5 Turn the workpiece around again and fold the edges in.
- 6 Put the resist for the card compartment in the middle of the purse, in a distance of 1 cm from the lower edge.
- 7 Put the two layers on top and wet them. Fold the upper edge over, using the resist's edge as an orientation. Felt the card compartment tightly on. Rub the purse from all side with your hands, pressing out the surplus water at the same time.
- 8 Now the work piece is full with slight pressure in a towel by rolling it 15 times.
- 9 Carefully cut the purse open at the upper length side with the scissors. Remove the resist and continue the cut toward each edge.
- 10 At the corners, cut approx. 3 cm from the upper edge in a downward direction. Leave the resist in the credit card compartment for now.
- 11 Full the work piece from all sides in the towel by rolling it 15 times. After two fulling rounds, slip your hand in the purse to avoid the two sides felting together. Now remove the resist from the credit card compartment.
- 12 Fold the purse differently and full it across the corners. Smooth the edges with the felting pin. If required, the purse should be pulled into shape. Continue to roll the bag from all sides to full it further.
- 13 Put the knitting needle in the card compartment to avoid the sides sticking together.
- 14 Once the bag is approx. 14 x 9 cm you can continue working with hot water. Wrap the workpiece in a towel and roll it from all side with considerable force.
- 15 Trim any excess fibers or small irregularities with the scissors.
- 16 Smooth the edges with the felting pin and shape the corners with the pliers.
- 17 Check repeatedly whether the credit card fits into the opening. Continue until the final size of 11 cm x 7 cm is reached.

Neutralize the work piece in vinegar water, tumble it and pull it into shape once more.

- 18 Should the credit card not really fit the compartment full it once more from one length and/or stretch it in the longitudinal direction.
- 19 After drying, the little purse is shaved with the razor.
- 20 First baste a matching zipper and sew it in by hand with blind stitches. The needle is put into the outer (visible) side very close to where it came out before, but slightly slanting, to slow and thoroughly fix the sewing.
- 21 Smooth the edges with your fingernails to wipe away the small holes where the needle went in.

INSTRUCTIONS: SANDRA FOLIE

More information

Sandra Folie was born in Germany and moved to South Tyrol in 2005, where she now lives with her family in Lana near Meran. She holds felting courses and takes part in art and craft fairs in South Tyrol and abroad. She makes items for everyday use from local Mountain Sheep wool. Her product range is not just classical, instead she always ponders how to use Mountain Sheep wool in current life matters – function and durability are crucial to her. Folie's objects are made of optically pleasing wool mixtures, i.e. the artist mixes wool already dyed in different colors to achieve new nuances. The mottled hues possess a lot of depth and make for nice combinations, also with natural colors.

Instagram: [@sandra.folie](#)

Website: selbergmocht.it/handfilzwerk

PAGES 48-51

A Wonderful Symbiosis

Sometimes, it takes just a singular moment to make your life take another turn. For Alexandra Kazmierczak that came during a felting course on a November day in 2010 – it was a dream of colors. Today, felting for her is considerably more than just another handicraft: It is the pure expression of her artistic identity and her way back to herself.

The 53-year-old felt artist Alexandra Kazmierczak lives in Espelkamp in North Rhine Westphalia, where she also grew up. Her professional way started with classics – she studied school music and German Philology in Hannover and Vienna and worked as a teacher later. But there are also many artistic stations and turning points. During her studies she sang in the famous Arnold Schönberg Choir in Vienna, followed by intense years working in the theatre, amongst other places in Stuttgart and Vienna, as a dramatic advisor, director's assistance and theatre pedagogy. Despite all these artistic outlets and experiences, her main profession as a teacher held her in an artistic dead-end street, as she says. Nature turned into her main source of power, but the personal, unique artistic expression still left a lot to be desired.

The Moment That Changed It All

In November 2010, she took part in a one-day felting course and this brought the long-awaited change. In the following night, she dreamt of colorful, ever changing and blending fibers. «This experience made my life new», she remembers. Feltmaking hit her with all its might. «A wonderful symbiosis of art, craft, colors and nature», she describes her passion. It is especially the connection of nature and artistic expression that fascinates her – two areas that had always interested her. From the beginning, she felt a great inner freedom. «Here everything I do is right – no matter what.» This sudden realization became the central agency of her life.

Feltmaking As A Combination of Nature, Memory and Self-Efficacy

What challenges the artist most with regard to feltmaking excels mere matters of design. Working with wool speaks to all senses – feeling, smelling and looking; it is an intensive experience. «Felting is good for me, it relaxes and grounds me, and it is always a challenge and the initial light into my creativity», she describes. The smell of wool brings back childhood memories – of nature, farms and mountain life. Feltmaking becomes a part of her personal history and origin. At the same time, it represents independence and self-efficacy. Just the mere thought to be able to make things for everyday use on her own was a moment of grace and led to feeling free.

Materials, Techniques and Artistic Expression

Her felted objects are mostly made in the wet-felting technique out of both fine and coarse qualities of wool. She is drawn to the wool of ancient sheep races provided by local keepers, like for instance Mountain Sheep wool. The ethical dimension plays a crucial role: Alexandra Kazmierczak focuses on animal-friendly upkeep and she prefers wool bought from local or at least traceable sources. Her objects range from bags to cushions. Images and wearable objects like hats, collars and vests. She is presently devoting herself to felted images enhanced by embroidery. Characteristic of her work are organic shapes, references to nature and the harmonious interplay between color and fiber. «Colors, forms and materials always come together in harmony», she explains her approach. Each piece is unique: «I really don't like repetitions.»

Intuition and Design in The Work Process

Her way of working is a mixture of strict planning and intuition. Life offers tons of spontaneous ideas – «light and quiet», and then she sets about to realize them. The creative process to her is a kind of translation of inner images: She chooses color and materials according to those first impressions. «It is truly a kind of literal translation», so she says, an interplay of imagination, expertise and an open mind for experiments.

A New Chapter: Art as the Center

Ever since she quit school, Alexandra Kazmierczak consciously followed a fresh path. Felting is slowly becoming her sole profession. Under her label «naturfilzkunst» she offers courses in adult education institutions and develops new formats for workshops. She sets not only store on teaching techniques, but to nurture personal feelings and experiences. «Each form of tackling and succeeding in an art makes the world a better place.» Felting turned her life around: «Suddenly, there was a way open to creativity.» Today she proudly refers to herself as an artist – something she didn't allow herself to feel before. Her work combines nature, handicraft at art and results in a both personal and universal expression.

LARA PYTER

More information

The felt artist from Espelkamp took courses with Istvan Vidak, Petra Kunz, Irina Kalaschnikow and Heike Spiekermann. Nowadays, she hosts courses herself – especially in the surrounding adult education institutions. She is a member of the Filznetzwerk e.V. Apart from that, she is a trained nature pedagogue, nature being her source of power and always connected to her skilled art.
naturfilzkunst.de

PAGES 52-53

Between Felt, Fabric and Fine Embroidery

In the rolling hills of the beautiful Yorkshire countryside, Sarah Lyte has found her unique way of artistic expression. Under the label «Seven Hands» she combines felt, fabric and embroidery to make astounding landscapes. They not only depict special places but also convey the respective atmosphere. She works intuitively, inspired by nature, movement and the interplay of different materials.

The name «Seven Hands» derives from palm prints found in the Lascaux cave in France. «I have always been interested in early art since I can remember, and I just love the handprints left by grownups and children alike. It's like one artist saying: Hello, I am here, across time», so the 60-year-old Sarah Lyte. She was an upper school teacher for many years and spent almost all of her life with her husband in West Yorkshire in Great Britain. There, the feltmaker lives in an old village surrounded by the impressive Yorkshire landscape.

«Several years ago, she started wet-felting. «I wanted to learn it, so I asked a friend to teach me. Her and her daughter taught me in the kitchen,» she tells us. She especially likes the many variants of the technique: «I like it because I can needle-felt on top and collage, or mix it with fabric or added fibres.» She wet-felts, using bubble wrap and a rolling mat. Then she adds whatever the piece needs, for instance fabric, stitch or yarn. «I'm a mixed media artist, so I use also upcycled fabrics.»

Working in a Sunlit Studio

Her studio is in the conservatory of the house overlooking the garden. We bought

the project five years ago and have slowly been doing it up. That includes the garden. My studio is very light and bright. «I work on tables pulled out of the municipal skip», says the enthusiastic upcycler. She doesn't regard herself a classical felter. «I paint with wool and fabric and I draw with a sewing machine – free embroidery is key for me.» Today she works full time as an artist. «My life is my art, it's like breathing. I couldn't exist without it.»

Upcycling Material

For her objects, she uses wools and fibres that are as sustainable as possible. She uses quite a few small businesses who keep their own sheep and goats. They produce their own batts and yarns. «I try to use UK-based wool», she points out. Also, the fabrics she uses are upcycled, donated or bought from charity shops and Rag Markets.

«Her wool paintings mostly deal with the Yorkshire landscape. «I am a keen walker. I'm out every day and take photos of everything that catches my eye», says the enthusiastic hiker. She responds to colour, texture and «the vertical interruption of the horizontal plain. The same lane can look totally different depending on the time of day and the weather – we get all sorts of weather here in just one day! It's very magical», she describes her beloved home. «What I try and capture is how it 'feels' to be there, absorbing the energy on nature.»

«Yorkshire has a very distinctive look, too. There are tons of traditional dry-stone walls which never cease to fascinate her. Her work, like her surroundings, are layered, too. «I start with the base, whether fabric collage or felt. Then I layer from the back to the front, similar to a stage set.» She works in intervals often – that is, the sky or the trees in in one session. «Layering and stitching, overlapping with more layering and stitching», she explains her working ways. She also combines wet- and needle felting

Exhibits and Workshops

«Each year, I try and push my small business in new ways», she tells us. She takes part in various exhibitions in her country. A few years ago. She started working with The Little Craft House in Saltaire doing regular workshops. «We run at least one workshop per month and I am astounded by how far people have come to take part, for example we had three lovely ladies from Australia joining

us.» Meanwhile, she also offers retreats, e.g. in Peak District or the Yorkshire Dales. «This year, we have two ladies from the US coming over», she says happily. She also has an online shop on Folksy.

LARA PYTER

More information

The British felt artist is an associate member of the «Hebden Bridge Open Studios», where she exhibits twice a year, in July and in December. She also takes part in «Art in the Pen» in August and in «Craft in the Pen» in November in the Skipton Auction Mart. She is further a member of «Milltown Arts» in Hebden Bridge, where she shows her art work in the city hall on a regular basis. She also showed her art at the Fusion Art in Harrogate and Living North in York.

Website: sevenhand.uk

Facebook: [Seven Hands](https://www.facebook.com/SevenHands)

TikTok: [sevenhandsdesigns](https://www.tiktok.com/@sevenhandsdesigns)

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

PAGES 54-55

Felt in the Operation Room

The felt artist Dr. Katrin Bigl incorporates her handicraft expertise with her profession as a teacher at the training school of the St. Georg Hospital in Leipzig where she trains skilled employees for the operating room. Dr. Bigl has integrated her love for feltmaking into her lectures. She reports on how these two different worlds met in an inspiring way.

Together with my colleague, Justine Fleischer, we teach mostly operation and anesthesia personnel (OTAs and ATAs). A part of our profession is to explain to the students how the wonderful and truly amazing human body is built and how it functions. My colleague Justine Fleischer teaches OTAs the characteristics of visceral surgery (i.e. all surgery in the stomach-intestines-system) and the various cutting techniques that are used therein. Since this is rather hard to explain by means of images or anatomical dolls, she had the brilliant idea to build such a system with stuffed socks in an old anatomical torso in order to render visceral surgery more clearly in 3 D. The

system was put to use but we soon found out that socks aren't sturdy enough to fit the purpose. During our many discussions and talks we developed the idea to felt a stomach-intestines-system for the torso with built-in cuts. This would enable us to show how these organs are properly situated in the body and how and what is cut or re-assembled, if necessary.

Organs Made From Sheep Wool

The organs were made in the wet-felting technique from Australian Merino or Mountain Sheep fleece and each organ was differently colored for better differentiation. The parts of the stomach-intestines that are rather thin by nature (esophagus – light brown, small intestine and appendix – green) were felted as cords, the more voluminous organs (stomach – pink, rectum – yellow, blind gut – wine red, sigmoid – skin color, colon – brown) were felted as hollow bodies over a piece of foil. Then the felted organs were put into proper shape, padded, fixed and put to dry. (Image 1) After drying came the more difficult part of the project – the organs were to be cut in such a way as done in the operation room, but they should still keep their form so the students could see how they are positioned in a healthy body. We fastened Neodym magnets at the cutting areas with glue and or sewed them on, so the single parts of the felted organs could be rearranged without damage of the material (Velcro, for example, is not suitable) With the large bowel, we achieved the possibility to show the removal of half the large bowel, appendix or sigmoid (Image 2) After all felted organs were prepared accordingly, they were built into the torso. The organs that don't get operated on were fixed with hot glue, for all mobile ones we used self-adhesive Velcro to keep them safely in place. (Image 3)

Great Teaching Material

With the help of this torso, my colleague can demonstrate during her lectures how certain operations are made and where certain single organs can be transposed, in case we have to remove inflamed parts of the large bowel (image 4) or simply the appendix. (Image 5) It was a beautiful and interesting project, from which I learned a lot about visceral surgery. Justine was happy with that unique demonstration material. Now all that remains to be seen is what improvements come out of it in practice.

DR. KATRIN BIGL AND JUSTINE FLEISCHER

More information

Dr. Katrin Bigl has been an enthusiastic feltmaker since 2009. She teaches courses in her own studio. Please find more information below

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Email: katrin@woll-lust-leipzig.de

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

PAGES 56-59

Humans and Animals Meet

With Alpacas, soft wool and a creative craft, Birgit Blumrich has made a special place in Leutersdorf, in the southern part of the Oberlausitz. On her «Alpaca Pasture Blumrich» she merges nature, felt art and encounters – she invites people to find some peace, to encourage them to work creatively and to find new inspirations.

Birgit Blumrich, with a diploma in educational science and a long-time secondary teacher of Art and English, took a decisive step in her career in 2024. She quit school and has been working as a freelancer on the farm. This decision changed her life. «I asked myself what in life is really important and healthy for me», she tells us. «Today, I find my inspiration in fibers, in the creative process and in the daily contact with my animals.»

☞ Together with her husband Günter she runs the Alpacawiese Blumrich – a place where natural experiences, handicraft and animal-based interventions meet. «Our farm combines in a unique way our love for nature, the creative potential of wool and the soothing effect of handicrafts», she says. «I want to open spaces for peace and quiet for people.»

The Lint Barn

As of 2018, the farm has been a place where people want to find new power in working with wool and being close to animals. In 2022, the so-called «Lint Farm» was added: a studio, course rooms and facilities and a shop. Leutersdorf is situated in the Dreiländereck Germany-Poland-Czechia at the edge of the natural preserve Zittau Mountains. «The landscape here is a true gift», according to Blumrich. «Woods, rocks, wide pastures – this is perfectly in tune with our life together with the animals.»

How the Alpacas Came to the Farm

This came quite by accident. After her father-in-law passed away in 2014, the question arose how to use the big property in the future. First the Blumrich family thought about keeping sheep, but then they became curious about alpacas. «I had long been felting, spinning and knitting», she tells us. «At some point in time, I wanted to know more about those animals and their wool. Then we decided to keep some.» After a thorough preparation of the pastures and stables plus an advanced training for keeping them, the first three moved in. At the same time, Birgit Blumrich trained as an expert for animal-based intervention and fostering in Leipzig from 2017 to 2018. Today they have four Huacaya Alpacas. They come in colors, natural white over beige to dark brown. Their serene and curious ways please the visitors. «There is a saying: Don't look too deeply into the eyes of an Alpaca, you might fall in love.» Next to the four alpacas, she also keeps two Bluefaced-Leicester sheep with great wool.

Patience, Attentiveness and Respect

The Alpacas are farm cattle and spend the most part of their day on the pasture. Their special aura also makes them suitable partners for her animal-based support work. «People are drawn to Alpacas, quite automatically so», she explains. «Their considerate ways are really soothing for many people.» Families, school kids, teams or single visitors come to the pasture, often with distinctly different things on their mind. Small groups make for nice encounters in a combination of nature watching and experience, creative work and contact with animals. One can learn to spin with a hand spindle, how to felt with sheep and Alpaca wool or creative work directly on the pastures. «When people start to spin or to felt, something changes», Blumrich says. «The hands are working; the head gets free – and all of a sudden there is room for talk and new ideas.» The visitors are also instructed in respectful ways of treating animals. «Alpacas love their distance; they are flight animals. And they don't like to be touched or stroked. Those who meet them learn to have patience, attentiveness and respect.»

The Rhythm of the Farm

A typical day on the Alpaca pastures follows the rhythm of the animals. They are greeted in the morning; water and hay supply is controlled and the pastures

looked after. «The animals structure our day», Blumrich says. «Of course it's work, but a very fulfilling one.» Every six to eight weeks, the claws are cut and their health is being monitored. A special moment is the shearing. «A freshly shorn Alpaca seems to be much smaller», she laughs. «But it is important and it makes the animals feel well.» The wool is carefully assorted: The finest quality (of the back) is best for spinning a felting, the coarser fibers go into bedding or cushions.

Felt Art and Ancient Craft Techniques

Next to her work with the Alpacas, wool processing is another central part of her working life. Since 2006 she has been felting and has deepened her knowledge through many courses and advanced trainings. She especially loves wet-felting. Blumrich works with raw wool, dyed fleece or roving and puts the hair of her Alpacas to good use. «I am fascinated what can be made out of a single kind of fiber.» She makes bags, containers or cushions, often from natural wool. Lately, she has been experimenting with mixed-media techniques, such as Graffiti-writing in felt. Apart from courses, she organizes craft meetings and spinning reunions on a regular basis. «To make something with your own hands is so very satisfying», she claims. «And I am grounded by my Alpacas every single day.»

Please find more information for courses, events and the Alpacas under
Website: alpakawiese-blumrich.de

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The Sweat Blanket Partschi from India

For many years now, Mari Nagy and István Vidák have been visiting the Katsch peninsula in the Indian federal state Gujarat to document the still vibrant traditions of the felting craft. Their encounters with artisan families, horse owners and village people allow for a glimpse into a craft that has been passed on over generations and is still closely connected to peoples' life there. Especially impressive is how the horse blanket Partschi is made that still plays an important role in the life of horsemen. Mari Nagy and István Vidák report.

During the past 15 years, we have visited places on the Katsch peninsula where the felting craft once thrived and is still alive today. These were: in the south, the city of Mundra, more to the west the village Todia and the city of Nakatrana, in the east the Gagodar village. We were deeply impressed by what we had found, and we still keep fond characteristic images and special moments in our memory. In Gagodar, friends received us in their house and garden. We always loved to come back to Amina and her son Habib. There we filmed as well, because we felt a special welcome from this family.

The Partschi Sweat Blanket

The horse blanket called Partschi carries a lot of meaning. It helps to protect the horse's back and the saddle movements do not chafe when it is used. A similar blanket is also made for camels. This is more than double the size and has a round hole in the middle for the hump through which the camel is covered with the blanket. Who has never seen such an object can hardly imagine how sturdy and resilient it is. It can stand up on its four sides alone. These features are signs of its high quality. At a closer look, you see several felt layers. The colors are also characteristic, mostly red and yellow hues. Around the edges there are rows of tassels which are subject to a lot of wear and tear.

Selling the Blankets

The house of the Mansuri family is at the outskirts of the village, on a hill. A part of the building has been built into a rock. Gül Mohammed Mansuri reminisces how they used to sell their goods in the olden days: «We collected 20 to 25 such blankets, tied them to our backs and off we went on foot to Bhuj. It took two days and sometimes we hitched a ride on an ox cart. From there we took the train to Ahmedabad and into Rajasthan and then to Jaipur. There were many horses there and people liked to buy our blankets. I collected the Partschis from several families. Each weighed about 3 kg. In those days I could carry 440 kg, about 13 Partschis. They hung off me from front and back.» Traders from Rajasthan also came to the Katsch peninsula, especially at occasions like weddings or family reunions. They always took a couple of blankets back to sell them.

Making Of and Tradition

«My grandfather Ibrahim Harun Mansuri became a master of folk art in 1977.

In those days, four people worked at a single blanket for about eight days. It was hard work and brought in only little money, that is why many abandoned the craft. The wool came mainly from their own sheep, but often they had to buy additional wool of the Rabari herdsmen. The wool of the Desi sheep is the most suitable.» The work was traditionally carried out by Muslim craftspeople. The names Mansuri or Pinjara mean feltmaker and the one who loosens the curly wool. The craft came to Katsch more than 200 years ago from Sind, something my grandfather Samu Pinjara remembered often. With him we made many felted carpets called Tschatai, mostly rectangular and later also round ones. During our stay, we were able to watch the Abdul Latif Mansuri family working in steps. In 2017, we also talked about the prices. Three-layer sweat blankets cost 8000 Rupees, those with four layers 10.000 Rupees and sweat blankets from Pakistan cost 6000 Rupees.

About the items which were most in demand Suman Ibrahim Mansuri told us the following:

About Tschakla: a small round or rectangular place to sit, made to order by the client. The master alone decided on the pattern. Musolo: A pattern of red, yellow and blue on a white background. Gugi: A rain cape for the monsoon, mostly used by shepherds. Partschi: it was the most important product. Each horse owner needed two or three of those, those who were better off even possessed four or five. If well-kept such blankets can be used for 20 t 25 years. Topi: Headgear that was ordered by the Brahmin monks. Today they wear the industrially-made topi.

Wedding Processions

On the Katsch peninsula, the horse is a fixture in the wedding ceremony. The groom rides to his bride's house with a sword. The trip takes two to three hours. Relatives dance around the horse. In front of the jolly procession march the musicians. We visited both Akbar Abdul as well as Ikbal Hassan Laka who provide horses for weddings. In the local vernacular they are called «gorevara», horse suppliers. In Gagodar, we met a farmer belonging to the ethnic group Patel. He owns two riding horses of the Katch breed. They are strong, big and enduring. He has two Partschi: One by master Abdul Latif Mansuri and an older one which Abdul's father made approx. 24 years ago. «The Partschi is good for the horse», he told us. «The saddle doesn't chafe the back. But never store it away when it is still wet. It has to dry in the sun, otherwise the white ants come and eat it. That is why we wash it with clear water and dry it in the sun afterwards.»

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

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