

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #61

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Dear Readers,

in these cold and foggy weeks even people who detest caps or hoods may change their minds – even more so if the headgear is as attractive as Kinga Huszti's hats. She made the great-looking model on the cover of this filzfun issue. We present the Hungarian felt artist as of page 32. As a special treat for our readers she explains in a step-for-step instruction how to felt leaves from fine wool that are light as a feather. (Page 36/37).

Feltmakers have been asking often how to felt crib figurines. Susanne Schächter-Heil, who has been making so-called "seasonal displays" for many years, has wet-felted an entire Nativity Scene. As of page 54 you get all the detailed information how to do it yourself!

In the past weeks and months many interesting exhibitions, felt events and courses have taken place. We report from the felt symposium in the US as well as from the Felt Education programs in Soltau and Düsseldorf, a newly-infected feltmaker, the blogger Sonja Schiff (page 26) has her say and we take you to seminars held in Austria and Greece.

Living means having to say good-bye to dear ones and family members. The Dutch felt artist Annemie Koenen has treated this subject in the shape of a huge, seamlessly felted cocoon called "Lebensweg" (Life's Path) that can

serve also as a soft, warming sheath for a deceased one. (Pages 44/45).

Also the feltmakers' scene had to say a last good-bye to a woman thanks to whom felting became publicly known and acknowledged as an art form. Inge Bauer, who also helped to develop the concept of the Felting School in Oberrot, has passed away in September. How strong her influence was on the scene show the many reactions and condolences expressed by her companions in art that you can read on pages 64/65.

We all wish you a harmonious Advent and Christmas season and a Happy New Year 2019. May it be full of ideas and time for felting!

*Best regards,
Your filzfun-team*

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de
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February 27th, 2019.
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Susan Sets Felt in Scene

Sheep breeder, businesswoman and a fighting character: Susan McFarland rocks the feltmakers' scene in Wisconsin with the biennial Midwest Felting Symposium.

Every two years Madison, the capital of the US state Wisconsin, turns into a hotspot of the fiber- and felt scene. The driving force behind the Symposium is Susan Mc Farland: she is a sheep breeder, a business woman and a fighter.

☞ The Symposium started 20 years ago from a small encounter of hand spinners and felt and wool enthusiasts – for example with the teachers Birgitta Krag Hansen und Ewa Kuniczak. First it was called »Wisconsin Spinning« and served as a kind of »Fibre Retreat« for spinning, wool and fiber enthusiasts, and took place in her large business premises, »Susan's Fibre Shop«. Now, after almost 20 years, it has turned into a mega event with international felt artists and participants from all over the US.

Symposium Without Sponsoring

»I have always been fond of organizing and I wanted to make sure that the Midwest should not be forgotten«, Susan Mc Farland tells us, »because here we have great artists, feltmakers and true wool enthusiasts. I love my clients and the idea of bringing people together«. The small but vivacious and highly energetic woman stems the whole biennial without sponsoring.

Renowned Instructors

For seven days in a row, one of the huge halls of the Alliant Energy Center Fair vibrates in the felting mode. At the big workshop premises, with partitions of bars and curtains, constant courses take place, for just a day or over the period of several days. They serve more than hundred participants at the same time. Not only the gigantic air conditioning system is humming, but also orbital sanders, tumblers and creative heads. This year, interested parties were instructed by Caroline Merrell (GB), Katia Mokeyeva (USA), Barbara Poole (USA), Becky Utecht (USA), Ricarda Aßmann (D), Olga Kazanskaya (D), Sigrid Banner (D) und Natalya Brashovetskaya (CYP).

☞ In the very centre are always Susan Mc Farland and her energetic assistant – not only the great members of the »Wisconsin Felters«, here especially Jennifer Angelo,

a never-tiring photographer, but also Holly Tang, who has been Susan's right hand for many years, and Maud Halcomb Lamarche, herself an avid spinner and instructor. In the fair shop they hand all desired materials tirelessly and with great patience over the provisional counter, they organize, lug all the materials and required equipment, build and take down and are responsible for all challenges that might arise in terms of technical problems.

Lectures and Shows

It does not end there: every evening there are scheduled lectures by some of the instructors present, a fashion show will be held and there is a daily »Get-Together« in the hotel lobby. The most remarkable highlight this year were a retrospective of Pamela Mc Gregor's teachings, works and felting journeys, and a small retirement celebration in her honour.

☞ Apart from all that, the participants and visitors can admire art works by the »Madison Felters« as well as by the far-travelled instructors and visitors.

☞ For Susan Mc Farland, there is hardly time to put her feet up after the inspiring but energy-sapping days. She packs her bags and is bound for the next event, a wool and sheep fair. She is the only officially acknowledged breeder of Teeswater Sheep in the whole US.

RICARDA ASSMANN

*The date for the next Midwest Felting Symposium will be published on the following website in due course:
www.midwestfeltingsymposium.com
Susan McFarland on the internet:
www.susansfiber.com*

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Provincial Gem

The Market Festival around sheep, wool and wood attracted many visitors around Raach am Hochgebirge in Lower Austria.

It is said that each Wool Fest and each textile art market have their own individual flair which lures people from far away by its specific mixture of the exhibitors present. This goes especially for the Marktfest around the subjects sheep and wool – this time wood was added – in Lower Austria is said to be

really special. Other fairs might be bigger, but the Marktfest, which took place this year around the seminary centre in Raach, offered exclusive partners (Joachim Regensburger from the Ötztaler Schafwollzentrum [Sheep Wool Center] comes solely to this event), exceptional surroundings and a program that was worth more than a mere excursion. The sunny fall weather played its part as well, letting the organisers, exhibitors, salespeople and several hundred guests shine up.

Focus Felt

Felted goods and objects were eminent in the offers of the artists and salespeople from Austria, Slovenia, The Netherlands, Slovakia, Kyrgyzstan und Germany: »Rumpelfilzchen« Elisabeth Clemens brought highly original key pouches next to antique armchairs imaginatively decorated with felt, Iveta Hruscova (see portrait as of page 40), Gerda Kohlmayr, Dorothea Schenner and Doris Tossmann showed their felt fashion, Barbara Martin animals and vegetables, Gertrude Mayrhofer felt and ceramics, Marion Mitteröcker felted elves, Andrea Seidl hats und caps and Andrea Spendier her »Filzallerlei« (approx. felt hopscotch). ☞ Anja Musek had brought felt art from Slovenia. In a great dollhouse the organiser Isabella Scherabon presented ravishing life-like cats. The carpets at the booth of Ursula Meyer were from Kyrgyzstan as were the garments presented by Cholpon Usenalieva. ☞ Apart from all that there were spinning and felting fibres, yarns, spindles and other equipment on sale as well as artisan-crafted objects made from wool and wood. In a demonstration workshop lathe turners showed their art. In trial workshops visitors could get acquainted with the old craft of making passament buttons. A mini-flock of Krainer Stone Sheep illustrated the motto of the market.

School Project and Exhibit

Isabella Scherabon is very committed to foster educational purposes. Therefore, she has made eleven objects from wool and wood together with children from eight schools and daycare centers from Vienna and Lower Austria. These objects were shown in Raach and further elaborated on during a guided tour. In the community centre next door the exhibit »Schaf trifft Baum« (Sheep Meets Tree) attracted many visitors (see pages 16/17).

☞ The festival turned into a real party through the music of Mic Oechsner

and his band »De Strawaza« and the bewitching acrobatics of Ariane Oechsner.

HELENE WEINOLD

*More photos from the Marktfest 2018 can be seen on the Internet. Also, the date for the next Marktfest around sheep, wool and wood can be found here in due course.
www.wechselwolle.at*

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Off-white Leaves of Thoughts

During a summerly meeting in Saxonia Facebook acquaintances turned into felting friends.

The experiment turned out successful: Felt-makers that had previously only met via Facebook were invited by the artist Yvonne Zoberbier (see her portrait in the filzfun no. 60) to meet in the real world over a summer weekend and to felt together in a quiet and relaxed atmosphere. So Claudia Kuckling, Monika Derrix, Meike Raßbach and Annette Quentin-Stoll got together in order to celebrate »Behaglichkeitsfilzen (Comfort Felting)« in the summer house of their host in Thierbaum, Saxonia.

☞ It had been agreed upon that the material processed should be undyed and white, equally the wool used should be white. True gems were laid out on the felting table: Wool and locks of different kinds of sheep, like Skudde, Mountain- and Merino Sheep wool, Alpaca and Mohair fibres, small wollen balls, silk fibres and fabrics, cotton gauze, delicate nettle cloth, cheese cloth, the framework of a tropical plant, lace doilies, spun wool, even metal curls from a Christmas decoration.

☞ All this was supposed to turn into a communal project, but each feltmaker wanted to take something back home, too. The five felters finally agreed on the subject »petals«, the design of which was left to each participant. The results show clearly the individual handwriting, starting from the choice of the material to the design of the various leaves. There was a lot of experimenting involved, which brought expected as well as surprising results: The leaf fibres stayed put as if they were glued on, metal curls instead rusted – challenging!

☞ On Sunday the participants made a communal image out of their individual petals. There was a lot of trying out, sorting out, shifting and experimenting until everything came out harmonically on the lawn or on a fence, allowing for different perspectives and various photographic angles. Finding a title was almost more difficult than the whole arrangement. Proposals like »Life Leaves« or »Leaf Games« were considered and discarded, until »Leaves of Thoughts« finally made it.

☞ When the summer meeting ended on Monday, the thoughts remained in Yvonne Zoberbier's garden, while the leaves made their way through different German cities. Now new ideas and thoughts for and about feltmaking can grow, as could yet other leaves when a similar new project is envisaged.

MEIKE RASSBACH

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The Textile Art Hiking Path Wanders on

For the last time, the village Much has hosted the Textile Art Hiking Path. This year's motto was »Biodiversity in the Wood«. The new tender has just begun.

For one month the Textile Art Hiking Path III attracted hikers and textile enthusiasts of all generations on the seven km round course near Much in the Bergische Land.

☞ On the hiking path, big format images of various artists around the motto »Wood::Biodiversity / Textile Art & Photography« were on display. Furthermore, there were two gallery spaces situated at the path itself: The Technical/Folklore Museum and GartenGlück showed original textile art made by the designers of the Textile Art Hiking Paths I and II.

☞ With this version, the organizer Silke Bosbach tried to answer two main public requests, for one thing to develop the area of photography in honour of the patron and wildlife film-maker Jan Haft and to offer also the elderly and disabled the possibility to see textile art originals. In the years before, textile objects were distributed around the uneven hiking trail which made it hard for people with handicaps to see them.

☞ On show were also the results of the project »Poetry Box«, where provided

sketch books had been filled with artistic elements and samples on the part of the participants.

Little Bells as a Lucky Charm

Those who missed out on the Textile Art Hiking Path III or could not get a ticket for one of the guided tours can find all pertaining information and photographs of all three occasions in a jubilee publication. As for the lucky charm: also this year the Mucher sheep bell can be had, a small, delicately sounding silver bell which brings back a memory of the Germana chapel and the hiking trail.

☞ The Textile Art Hiking Path is a honorary project of Silke Bosbach's studio. In the meantime, it is actively supported by more than 42 cooperation partners. The financial gains go to a children hospice. ☞ The Textile Art Hiking Path will no longer be held in Much. The next place was not decided upon at copy date. As the tendering procedure for the new Textile Outdoor Award it will be published at www.faser-um-faser.de. Already now we would like to reveal that the visitors can look forward to a very special form of presentation which has not existed for textile art before.

FREJA HANSEN
www.faser-um-faser.de

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Mini-Yurt and Mixed Material

Fifteen Graduates from the Dutch Felt Academy Presented Their Impressive Graduation Pieces.

Sculptural objects, wall art, floating elements, even a slim, high yurt and felted bowls coated in straw or other plant materials were on show at the Dutch Felt Academy, when chairwoman Truus Huijbregts congratulated the 15 graduates (see box) on the successful ending of their training. For years they had studied in course modules on site under the tutelage of the instructors Cora Jongsma, Ellen van der Wiel, Brigit Daamen, Birgit Speelman, Annemie Koenen, Anneke Copier, Astrid Polman, Anja Schrik and Truus Huijbregts. There were home assignments as well where

the knowledge conveyed, skills and experiences were deepened until the students were advanced enough to tackle their graduation pieces. They had to decide again and again whether to focus more on the technical workmanship or creative development or a combination of both. Should the piece have a spatial outline? How big should it become?

«The term 'graduation piece' is rather nerve-racking for the students», Truus Huijbregts admitted during her address to the graduates, »the expectations being very high. Trust and mutual respect had steadily grown during the course of the training, as she emphasized: »This is an important condition to share experiences, to question one another and to give proper feedback. They all were able to learn from each other, while each student worked at her own personal development simultaneously. Their extraordinary fascination for wool and felt made the graduates overcome their limits, made them research and experiment, so there were always new facets waiting to be discovered.«

TRUUS HUIJBREGTS
www.dutchfeltacademy.com

PAGE 14-15

Mixed Double

Felt meets ceramics, wood, metal or photography: The co-operation of artists from different fields under the motto »Kontakt II« in the Netherlands resulted in exciting objects.

What kind of project will come out of the co-operation of two artists from different disciplines? Reina Visser and Jolande van Luijk of the Regional Group Nord of the Dutch Viltkontaktgroep wanted to know. The two artists took up the chance that Leeuwarden in the province Friesland had been pronounced one of the two European culture capitals in the year 2018 to create an unusual exhibition project. One felter each from Viltkontaktgroep, Region Nord and an artist from Friesland working in another artistic field were combined into duos who got to know each other last year during a day's meeting. Some pairs hit it off instantly, others had to be re-grouped. Twenty »mixed doubles« were finally embarking on an artistic discovery together.

Exhibit »Kontakt II«

The results of this experiment were shown inside and outside of the garden »De Vertakking« in Ryptsjerk over four weeks.

«As different as the pairs were the objects shown during »Kontakt II«. »Was ist dein Gold?« (What is your gold?) Margriet van Dam and the puppeteer Tienieke van Montfort called their big white lion made from wool, papier maché, rope, glass and fabric. Jolande van Luijk and the furniture designer Trynke Grijpma titled their armchair with a cover of onion peel-dyed wool »Auf Gold sitzen«, (Sitting on gold). Meta Geerts and Thea Hoek combined wool and copper from old boilers, Everdien van der Hel and the sculptor Johan Visser wool and birch multiplex wood, Mieke Hoekstra and Siete Koch, Janny Smit and Karin Berne as well as Bianca Vonk and Agatha Roosendaal felt and ceramics.

«With their installation »Gegensatz 1 + 2« (Contrast 1 + 2) made by paving slabs and felt Viola Holman and Bowe Roodbergen »deviated from the usual goings«, as they explained, and tried something entirely new. The felter Thora Justesen together with a book binding group examined with the help of the art object »Bindung« (bond, binding) the differences and und common grounds of hand-made paper and felt.

Felt and Photography

Several »mixed doubles« investigated the possibilities of felt and photography. Cecile Kruip for instance went up in the air with the painter and photographer Ellen Floris: »In den Wolken« (In the Clouds) is the title of the object, a cloud photograph with felt and angels on woolen clouds. Martje Visser and the photographer Anja Zwanenburg reached a new dimension with »Leere Landschaft« (Empty Landscape), a mix of photography, collage, wood, wool, plastics and fabric. Marjan Postma and her son Pieter worked together for the first time and presented their art object »Hinter dem Deich« (Behind the Levee), where photography and felt are connected by the landscape.

«Objets trouvés and painted felt rugs brought Ans vd Valk and the painter and photographer Brenda vd Zee together, who treated them differently and re-arranged them individually. Anet Salavati and Bart Dertien, photographer and an expert for blueprint developed their own technique to make blueprinting on felt feasible in their combined work »Wir laufen auf der Erde und tragen die Welt« (We walk on the Earth and carry the world).

Birds Made from Bagpipes

Sandrina Schaafsma and the recycling artist Tineke Szarzynski created six »Fremde Vögel« (Strange Birds) from wool, bagpipes and pressing irons and a lot of humor. The felter Jessica Lelieveld and the painter and sculptor Joke Ket showed their mutual love for the tidelands in their communal object made of felt and mud.

«More surprising and expressive art works were presented by Bernadette Verheij and the glass artist Annet van Midwoud, Reina Visser, the calligrapher Baukje Scheppink, Greet Vrijenhoek and the mixed-media-artist Margaretha Posthumus as well as Regina Wieling with the goldsmith Hennie Broers.

«The organizers Reina Visser and Jolande van Luijk were not only pleased with the success of their action. They are convinced that they initiated also enduring effects »Many co-operations turned into friendships and further professional co-operations.«

VIOLA HOLMAN
www.viltkontaktgroep.nl

PAGE 16-17

Sheep Meets Tree

The first CraftArtFusion-Project of the Austrian wollmodus association resulted in two successful exhibits. The public prize was awarded to Bärbel Theilen-Schnieders.

That sheep wool and wood can be combined creatively and artistically in many diverse forms was proven yet again by 14 international artists that took part with 17 exhibits in the first CraftArtFusion-Project of the Austrian felt collective wollmodus. The results were presented during two shows in Vienna and in Raach am Hochgebirge.

«Guests and artists who visited the event were fascinated by the different effects of the show at the two different locations. While the objects shown in the Kunstbogen in Vienna displayed their earthy, cheeky side, thus fitting well into the aura of social romanticism of the scene location, they seemed homier and better attuned to craftsmanship in the dapper function rooms of the community office building in Raach am Hochgebirge.

Wool's Many Faces

This was fully intended for us as organizers of the shows. We wanted to

draw attention to the fact that sheep wool isn't simply sheep wool. Sheep wool is many-faced, sometimes lovely, sometimes cheeky, snuggly, scary, dapper – but always thrilling and full of surprises. ☞ So the two events attracted many interested parties and artists from fields of textile and wood design. In the big-city atmosphere of Vienna as well as in the pastoral idyll of Raach am Hochgebirge they could convince themselves how perfect wood and wool match, complement each other and strengthen the other medium's expression. Already on-site ideas, techniques, advice and inspirations were busily gathered and exchanged. It had been our hope that within the scope of the project CraftArtFusion textile artists (in spe) network, exchange their plans and ideas and inspire each other, and it was not betrayed.

Prize for »Lebensadern« (Life Veins)

At the voting for the public prize many found it hard to decide upon one art work only – a sign for the quality of the work submitted. The prize enables the winner to take part at the next exhibit of the CraftArtFusion 2019 all expenses covered and without being juried. 2018 this prize went to Bärbel Theilen-Schnieders for her object »Lebensader« (Life Veins). ☞ In order to kindle first inspirations for new projects and pleasant anticipation on the whole we are pleased to introduce the new »dancing partner« for sheep wool for the coming year. 2019 everything will deal with art works made of paper and sheep wool under the motto »Wir WOLLEN PAPIER«.

☞ We are all incredibly curious how the event will turn out.

BARBARA FÜREDER AND
SAWATOU MOURATIDOU
www.wollmodus.at

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Painted with Wool

The felted images made by Susanne Weber were on show in Vienna. Her felted painting »Tiffany Spring Flowers« was given an award by the Bauhaus Prairie Art Gallery.

At an unusual place in the centre of Vienna, the Polyphone Oikos of the Categorical Pastoral Care of the Archdiocese Vienna,

the wet- and needle-felted paintings of Susanne Weber were on display. The Polyphone Oikos, a co-operation project of the Arch Diocese with the University of Vienna for Applied Arts combined well-being, art and faith in an enticing way in the 6th floor of the diocesan building.

Material and Tools

At the opening numerous interested visitors looked at the felt art objects with their impressive colour variety and the skilled play of structures and light, and also held the demonstration part, which is rather unusual for such events, in high esteem. Susanne Weber had brought materials like wool, plant and artificial fibres, wool in all stages of processing »ex sheep« and various tools along and answered all questions regarding felting techniques and her individual way of working. She was pleased: »This was a wonderful occasion to draw attention to feltmaking as an art form, which – at least in Austria – is still underrated.

Hand-Spun Yarns

In her artistic work Susanne Weber always strives to put the entirely different characteristics of the wool, depending on the breeds, to full use in her paintings. In order to achieve the desired effects, she often dyes the wool herself and uses hand-spun yarns or natural objets trouvés in her work.

☞ Animal protection plays a big part in life and art of Susanne Weber. She explains: »It is important to me to use only materials that can be obtained without hurting, let alone killing an animal.«

Third prize for »Tiffany Spring Flowers«

Susanne Weber has yet another reason to be happy except for her show in central Vienna: her painting »Tiffany Spring Flowers« was placed third in the August exhibit »Creative Inspiration« of the Bauhaus Prairie Art Gallery.

HELENE WEINOLD

Susanne Weber

The felt artist Susanne Weber, born 1962 in Vienna, has a doctorate in biology (behavioural science). She further works as a freelance medicinal translator. In the years 2016 and 2017 she was nominated for the Arts&Crafts Design Award and showed her art within the scope of the 1st and 2nd Viennese Filzfestwoche with great success. Her art objects have

been shown in German and English feltmakers' magazines and can be seen at many juried online exhibits of international galleries. The filzfun has presented the artist and her works in detail in issue no. 53.
www.susifilzt.at

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Anything but Slippers!

Karin Twelkemeier and Ulrike Wieland demonstrated the artistic possibilities of the medium felt at the gallery ét in Versmold.

In connection with the keyword felt many associate the material with bedroom slippers, bags or hats. The visitors of the exhibition titled »Filz – altes Handwerk und Kunst« (Felt-Ancient Craft and Art) in the gallery ét of the Kunstkreis Versmold were pleasantly surprised when Karin Twelkemeier and Ulrike Wieland, both certified felt artists, showed so many more facets of the material during one month. Already the more than 100 visitors of the opening were both thrilled and surprised by the woolen art objects, accompanied by Christian Beckers' piano music.

»Felting Means To Let Go«

In her opening speech Anke Güttler, another committed felt artist, cited an unknown feltmaker with the words: »Felt means to work from your innermost core, three centimeters above the navel, from the solar plexus. Feltmaking means to let go, it cannot be explained, it just happens.«

☞ While the art work of both artists could not be touched, haptic action was greatly encouraged at the »Fühlstrecke« (Touching Stretch) of the German Filz Netzwerk. By means of felted test samples the guests could experience how different the felt turns out according to the different kinds of sheep wool involved. They marveled at how thick and sturdy, but also delicate or even transparent felt can turn out and how many technical possibilities there are as to shaping and structuring.

HELENE WEINOLD

The artists on the Internet
Karin Twelkemeier: www.filzgewerke.de
Ulrike Wieland: www.filzpuschen.de

Cube, Ball, Reversible Jacket ...

At the summer Kolleg (education) of the Filz-Netzwerk in Soltau experts passed on their many skills.

Intricate shapes like cubes with braid patterns, balls and complex hollow forms, reversible jackets, animated images and decorative blossoms were made at the courses held during the third felt education to which the German Filz-Netzwerk had invited the participants in the premises of the felto Filzwelt.

~ Barbara Eichhorn was the first with a three-day course for reversible jackets. The instructor helped with the most complicated requests regarding surface and jacket design of her students.

New Working Tables

The jacket course was not only the opening event but also an opening regarding space and facilities. The felt museum of the felto Filzwelt is situated next to the felting company Röder. Röder provided a stock room in the basement of the brick building and felto took care of furnishing it with new, broad working tables. Working there was agreeably cool and uncramped. Two further courses took place in the Röder dance hall. The felt education ran smoothly and harmonically, thanks last but not least to the committed felto team.

~ In the two-day seminary of Silke Thrun-Schrape dealing with three-dimensional hollow forms stencils were calculated, cut, basted and then wrapped in wool. So truly fascinating shapes came out, one more intricate than the next.

Life-Like Blossoms

In the dignified hall the most marvellous life-like flowers blossomed for an entire day: simple poppies, daisies, even dandelions. The skilled hands of Barbara Westerath showed in many steps how felted plants are made from wool. She has developed her own technique which makes it possible to felt two identical blossoms in one step with hardly any waste.

~ Barbara Westerath managed to inspire two people who had never felted before: A mother and her 14-year old daughter, vacationers, who had spontaneously decided to visit the course. They returned to their holiday quarters with happy faces, well-turned out blossoms and infected by the felting virus.

Felted Images in the Kindergarten

The astounding versatility of wool was proven once again when the animated images were installed. When Susanne Schächter-Heil had introduced the technique and invited the participants to make respective sketches all present were bewildered by how different the task could be interpreted. From a later application of the animated images in kindergartens to a knight's tent as a presentation site everything and then some was in the air.

~ The more complex calculations of the work pieces in Stefanie Hofmann's course »Braided and Felted« presented quite another challenge. But all the exhaustive preparatory work and the intricate calculations were worth the trouble when you finally held the braided surfaces of the bags (which had been made from self-made pre-felt materials) in your hands.

~ Christiane Claren started a double experiment with her »surface laboratory«. Nearly all desired surface structure techniques could be seen in her impressively complex work pieces, used as sources of inspiration and implemented accordingly. The feltmakers could use four days or a single day to profit from the experience and skill of the lecturer. The daily change of staff and group members made the co-operation especially exciting.

~ Balls Made from Woollen Vulcanoes At the end of the courses enticing ball creations grew out of wool volcanoes. Petra Nasdal conveyed her special ball making technique and her close attention to surface design. She further enriched the material stock of her students by bringing self-bred silk in natural hues or dyed which lent a particular charm to the ball objects.

~ At an evening barbecue which took place on the Eggers farm near Soltau the feltmakers and their families took up the chance to freshen up old contacts and to make new ones.

SUSANNE SCHÄCHTER-HEIL

Felt Education 2019

The next Felt Education of the Filz-Netzwerk will take place in the youth hostel Detmold from July 25th to August 4th 2019.
www.filznetzwerk.de

A Feast for Fibre Fans

A wide range of courses was on schedule during the third Filz Kolleg (Felt Education) in Düsseldorf.

The joy to meet old acquaintances again, to make new felting friends and to turn internet contacts into real life, but also curiosity regarding interesting themes and techniques attracted many fiber enthusiasts to visit the third Filz Kolleg held in the Freizeitstätte Garath in Düsseldorf. Many participants came from North Rhine -Westphalia, but also had travelled there from Berlin, Northern and Southern Germany as well as the Netherlands.

~ In the three-day course with Olga Kazanskaya beautiful nuno felts were prepared that were then dyed, printed in a medium printing process and further made into vests.

Upcycling of Felt Waste Material

In Sigrid Bannier's course waste material from felting was the order of the day. Felt pieces were cut and sewn together with a sewing machine. In this upcycling course was the only male participant, who was very interested and contributed greatly to the course. Susanne Pfuhrer's group was more international, since several Dutch participants had applied, also thanks to the border vicinity. They all were intent on felting custom-made, colorful skirts in their respective favorite colors.

Three-Dimensional Animals

ASTOUNDING bowls resembling honeycombs were felted in the course of Jeanette von Itter after Charlotte Sehmisch's method and the participants of Sandra Struck-Germann's course made wall hangings with three-dimensional animals.

~ For the first time there was a special course on schedule for interested parties: Sabine Tietze conveyed the spinning techniques for so-called art yarns at her spinning wheel. Ricarda Aßmann held two courses for fanciful miniature capsules and unique jewelry, and as always she succeeded to thrill her students with her distinctive ways.

SANDRA STRUCK-GERMANN

The fourth Filz Kolleg in Düsseldorf is planned from 20th to 23rd August 2019. Further information will be published on the internet in due course.
www.filzwerkstatt.info

Sitting Furs Made from Regional Wool

During two courses in the city and the rural district of Augsburg Kerstin Waizenegger passed on her expertise in felting with raw wool.

Because feltmaking with raw wool is getting more and more popular, the courses held by Kerstin Waizenegger to felt sitting furs at the Schäferei Schurer in Baiershofen, rural district Augsburg, and at the Cityfarm in Augsburg were much sought after.

«Working with raw wool stems from the wish to work with that kind of wool that is growing sustainably and regionally in front of our doorsteps and is sold too cheaply, often even thrown away», says the instructor, who has been working as a feltmaker in the Allgäu region for more than ten years. «In a side effect, the natural, long-lasting character of the different kinds of raw wool in the finished products is something special indeed.»

Seminaries for Sheep Herders

Already in the year 2017 Conny Schurer, a committed sheep keeper from Baiershofen, has been a guest in Kerstin Waizenegger's felt garden in Aichstetten. She came with a pickup truck full of wool since she wanted to offer sitting furs from the wool of her Wallis Blacknose sheep and her Krainer Stone sheep in her farm shop and on fairs. This year, Kerstin Waizenegger travels in the opposite direction: she is going to teach the felting sitting furs (also for tractors) to shepherders who want to learn further processing methods for the wool of their flocks. Next to the wool of Conny Schurer's sheep also fleeces from Coburg fox and the brown Mountain sheep were at their disposal.

Felting at 39 °C

At one of the hottest days of the year one of the two sitting-fur courses was held at the Cityfarm, a communal mini farm at the outskirts of Augsburg, where Ildikó Reményi-Vogt and Benjamin Vogt demonstrate successfully how country life works in the city. At 39 ° in the shade the participants felted warm furs that were proudly presented on the massive wooden stools made by Benjamin Vogt.

«In the course I learned so much more about wool qualities and felting

techniques than I ever could have taught myself», said one of the feltmakers. «And felting together is much more fun than doing it alone.»

HELENE WEINOLD

Sculptural Portraits and Finest Felt Clothes

At the third felting education of the wollmodus collective beginners and advanced students learned a lot of new things.

For the third time the Austrian felting collective wollmodus had sent out invitations for an international advanced course – this time held at the seminary centre Raach am Hochgebirge. Surrounded by woods and meadows beginners, advanced students and artists learned more about new developments and techniques.

First felting experiences could be had at the one day-long basic course hosted by Barbara Martin. The morning class felted blossoms under skilled instruction. After lunch the beginners tried out bigger projects like little bags or sitting pads. One participant brought cats' hair along, which were mixed with sheep wool and felted into a bracelet.

A course for clothing with the Russian teacher Nina Demidova had the students busily drawing patterns and cutting allowances. Then viscose was laid out thinly, on top of that a layer of fine Merino. For two days, the fibres were connected by stroking and fulling and then shrunk to the respective fitting size. The result were accurately fitting and overwhelmingly beautiful dresses and jackets.

Ecoprint on Indigo

In her course Indigo-Ecoprint Pia Best-Reininghaus told us a lot about the plants about to be used. The students were allowed to try things out and dyed the fabrics to be printed with Indigo. On the second and third day, different kinds of plants were put on the previously dyed fabrics, wound around iron bars and tied well. Then the fabrics together with the bars and plants were fixated in hot steam. The unwrapping of the fabrics was quite a thrill and the results were admired by all participants of the seminary.

Needle-Felted Busts

In the course «Portrait with Felt Needles» Isabella Scherabon taught the feltmakers to make highly individual, bewitching portrait busts with the felting needle following an introduction as to proportions and anatomy.

Sea creatures was the subject of Sawatou Mouratidou's course where the audience learned to make and enhance fins, eyes or feelers and to connect them to the fish's body. So fantastic, three-dimensional ocean creatures came into being.

BARBARA MARTIN
www.wollmodus.at

My Very First Hat

Almost without any felting experience the blogger Sonja Schiffer took part in a hat course and found out: Felting makes you happy.

As long as I can think of my life motto is: At the end of my life I want to be able to tell myself that I have tried everything I wanted to try out. I want to give room to all talents hidden in myself. Therefore, I have felted for the second time in my life this year. After a bag which I made two years ago I have made my first hat, a fiery red one.

In my Hungarian village Sarród there is an art camp each summer. Next to all kinds of painting courses there is always a feltmaker's course with the Hungarian craft artist Ildikó Baranyai. The beautiful thing is: Most of the participants are village women, and there is always a wonderful ambient. This year the workshop took place in the studio and garden of the artist Janós Grubits.

Chance Factor

To my surprise, feltmaking was a lot easier than I thought. At the first time already, I was truly surprised at how simple it really is. I admit that the chance factor may have played a part with some of the results – the material decidedly has a life, dynamics of its own.

I cannot give a detailed instruction here, but that much I can say: Several working steps were necessary for the hat. The biggest parts are played by sheep wool, hot soapy water, a hat stencil, a

wooden head, bubble foil, water, my own hands and fingers and a needle and a thread in the end. Then the hats were left to dry in the sun.

Spanish Flair

Since my hat looked at first as if it belonged to the cartoon Robin Hood (I had made it too small) Ildikó Baranyai showed me how to felt a red blossom, et voilà: Robin's hood turned into a small hat with a decidedly Spanish flair. Admittedly, my hat is not perfect. It is after all my very first hat. Today I would make it bigger and use a different stencil. But what I can really say is: Felting is a lot of fun – it even makes you somewhat happy!

SONJA SCHIFF
www.vielfalten.com

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Felting Siga Siga

On the Greek island Zakynthos holidaymakers can relax while designing and working with wool. Some of them have found a new passion there.

A small stone house, grown over with Bougainvillea, surrounded by olive and mulberry trees and huge pines near the sea has served as my part-time studio for five years now. Vacationers from Germany, Austria and Switzerland have found their way to this special place again this summer in order to get acquainted with felting, offered next to other courses.

☞ Many came without any previous knowledge and let themselves simply be inspired by the variety and possibilities of this ancient craft and the material, while others had already set their minds on concrete projects. But all without exception wanted to get away for a while from the fast life style, the affluent society, the ruthless consuming and from feeling anonymous. On Zakynthos everything works »siga, siga«, meaning »slow« or »peacefully«. To experience the making of something with your own hands and simple means led to a deep feeling of happiness.

Different Levels

Among the guests were beginners as well as advanced learners. Working together was the point, so that each could learn

from the other. During the first days the beginners were made familiar with the basic techniques while the advanced feltmakers began to work on their individual projects after respective meetings and instructions. On the remaining days each participant worked on her piece in her individual style and speed.

Nuno and 3D Techniques

Mostly we used Merino wool, where we integrated silk fibres, wool curls, fabrics and various other materials that can be felted in. Nuno, relief and different 3D-techniques were taught, learned and applied. When it got too hot, we dropped everything and went for a swim.

☞ It was my task to assist all with my personal know how, advice and action. Here a person needed encouragement, there I had to prevent one from overestimating her capabilities, but each had to be given room and support to develop and grow their skills.

☞ Small sculptures, hollow bodies of all kinds and sizes, jewellery, small images and airy summer shawls were made. At an exhibition at the end all students presented their works of art with much pride, and some revealed how much certain characteristics of wool had thrilled and pleasantly surprised them. I listened to the students talking and felt great joy about the fact that the fire burning in me can be passed on.

SAWATOU MOURATIDOU
sawatou.com/WordPress

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Treasures in Colour

In Ellen Bakker's workshop at Oberrot silk fabrics were painted and felted.

Felters know all along that silk and fine wool are a perfect couple. The attendants of Ellen Bakker's three-day workshop »Seidenmalen und Filzen« (silk painting and felting) at Wollknoll's at Oberrot became acquainted with a new dimension of that combination.

☞ Kerstin Scherr, Gisela Bareiss, Birgit Eisemann, Chien Li-Chuan and Kerstin Waizenegger designed silk fabrics and scarves in several techniques with silk paints to the top of their bent and indulged themselves in colours and

shapes. They painted, sprayed and printed so that in the evening there were lots of coloured silk fabrics ready to be gazed in amazement.

☞ From the second day on the group began to felt the fabrics under the guidance of Ellen Bakker. They prepared prefeltes and fabrics and joined them in the felting machine.

☞ Every attendant had several ideas how to use the magnificent felt fabrics: for grand foulards, clothes, cushions, ponchos or scarves. Unfelted silk shawls were immediately hemmed and ready for wearing.

KERSTIN WAIZENEGGER

Ellen Bakker on the Internet:
www.colorsofellen.com

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Felting at the Border

At the end of February next year, Bad Schandau will become the meeting point for felt enthusiasts. The Saxon hosts have prepared an attractive program for the feltmakers' meeting.

In Bad Schandau near the Czech border feltmakers from all over Germany and the neighbouring countries will meet for the 24th Felt Encounter under the motto »Felting at the Border.«

☞ »The dreamlike landscape of so-called Saxon Switzerland is a place to find inspiration, not only for the fine arts of the presence and the past but also for us Saxon feltmakers«, the organizers explain: »We do not want to become limited in our creative work, instead we actively want to test our limits regarding felting techniques and materials in theme studios. Some of us become frontier runners between several kinds of art forms.« For Saturday one such encounter is planned, a synthesis between felting and play in scenic sketches around wool and felt.

Cabaret and Hiking

The program of the Felt Encounter from Thursday, Feb. 28th to Sunday, March 3rd 2019 includes (next to communal felting and the members' meeting of the Filz-Netzwerk) also a visit to the National Park Center, a guided hike and an evening with cabaret and vaudeville shows.

☞ As of Tuesday, February 26 th to Thursday, February 28th 2019 renowned instructors will be holding pre-courses. All information and application forms can be downloaded from the Internet: www.filznetzwerk.de

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Hidden Beauty

The Hungarian felt artist Kinga Huszti likes to design unusual hats that accentuate the personality of the woman wearing it.

Whenever Kinga Huszti presents her extraordinary hat creations at a textile art and crafts market there is hardly a woman who can resist the temptation to try on one model and to admire herself in the mirror. This is precisely what the felt artist intends: »I love to watch how the hat changes a person and makes her smile.«

☞ Hats have always had a special appeal for Kinga Huszti. »They are the objects that I make the most, because it gives me a lot of pleasure to see how the hidden beauty of the wearer comes to the fore.«

☞ Creativity is in Kinga Huszti's blood. Her mother was not only an inventive cook, but also made ravishing carnival costumes. Her grandmother, a tailor, was »a truly exceptional person. I watched her conjuring up elegant dresses from the dreary supply of the 1970ies Hungarian fashion industry.« Together with her cousin small Kinga played for hours with old dresses and fabrics in her tailor's shop waiting to be turned into something new. »Grandma Julia had impeccable taste and I inherited the motto 'less is more' from her,« she fondly remembers.

Printer and Typographer

That she would turn into a textile artist herself was not clear from the beginning. In her childhood she was surrounded by her beloved books, which is why she set her mind on becoming a professional book conservator or restaurateur already at the age of twelve. And so she did, and she further trained to be a printer and typographer as well. That her profession required discipline and utmost precision is beneficial even now. »When I came in contact with felting at the Hungarian Heritage House some years, a marriage and three sons later, I fell in love with it instantly. Feltmaking lets me become a

child again and I can use both sides of my personality: the careless, playful me, led by feelings that gets lost completely in whatever I'm doing, but also the grown-up, rational me that is dominated by thoughts and facts.«

☞ Making very thin felt comes natural to Kinga Huszti. Laying out the wool in this way relaxes her, »like doing crossword puzzles or knitting is for others.« Especially for summer dresses, hats or scarves she appreciates the thin felt the most, since more light shines through and it drapes very attractively.

Courses in Hungary and Abroad

Kinga Huszti lives and works in the Hungarian capital Budapest at the end of a very quiet cul-de-sac part – exactly the right place for her creative work. There, but also in other places in Hungary and abroad, the 50-year old artist likes to pass on her felting expertise and knowledge as an instructor.

☞ Although she lives in the city, she likes to surround herself with beautiful, natural objets trouvés: »Three days out of five I arrive in my studio with something in my hand that I picked up on the way. « Virginia creeper, ivy and a »plant said to be Australian with huge heart-shaped leaves whose name I don't know«, these all grow in abundance near her studio and continue to inspire her. The heart-shaped leaves, for instance, have led her to make bags, pendants, gloves and even a hat in the shape of a leaf over the years.

☞ Árpád Kun's novel »Boldog észak« (»Happy North«) about an outsider with African, Vietnamese and French roots who feels he does not belong to either Africa, Asia or Europe has made a lasting impression on her. »When reading sometimes I just had to stop as pictures were whirling in my head. There is a huge baobab tree at one point in the story which evoked memories of a Hungarian folktale about the tree that reaches the sky and has no end.« Because Kinga Huszti loves nature, trees and leaves so much, she shares a step-for-step instruction to make a felted leaf with the *filzfun* readers (see page 37)

HELENE WEINOLD

Kinga Huszti on the Internet
www.feltikinga.com
www.facebook.com/feltikinga

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Felt Finds Photo

Elisabeth Paul makes an astounding and artistically convincing connection from photography to felt in her big format images.

Anybody who passed Elisabeth Paul's booth at the Textile Art Berlin stopped to look twice: Were these photos or felted images? The answer is: both! The 57-year old artist from Singen combines photos and felt. She continues the photographic image in felt so skilfully that both media form a unity, yet the borders between the photograph and the felt remain discernible.

☞ »Rather the unspectacular motifs draw one's attention by colouring or structure«, the artist explains. »But all have one thing in common: They have been fascinating me for a small moment.« This moment she catches with her camera and holds it – »without additional corrections.«

☞ Then she expands the photograph by means of felt: »The eye of the beholder should take the image in as a whole, which means that the transitions between the diverse materials have to match in color and shape.«

☞ For her images, Elisabeth Paul uses fine Merino wool, high-quality wool-silk mixtures and the wool of Mountain sheep. All felts are wet-felted by hand in the fulling technique. »It is always exciting to see how the material wool changes when a felt is made«, Paul explains. While the wool seems delicate, soft and fluffy when initially laid out, the whole haptics change during the felting process. »I enter into a dialogue with the material with all my strength, with my whole body. Only at the very end of the felting process, yet in an altogether different way, the fineness, the warming capacity of the wool can be felt anew, albeit in the shape of a surface.«

☞ By means of material test samples the artist checks the colours which she mixes by addition: »Certain colours are put on top of each other, then the felting is carried out. Only when the samples are dry, I can check on the colour. The biggest challenge each time is that the transitions to the photo match after the fulling is finished.«

☞ Mostly, Elisabeth Paul decorates the finished felt surfaces by pointillist, free embroidery with silk yarns. By accumulating embroidered points she

continues to carry out filigree colour transitions or lines of the photos in felt. »This is the most meditative part of my work and it is very time-consuming. At the same time, saying good-bye to a particular image starts.«

~ At last she mounts the felted surface onto a plate and so brings felt and photo together.

~ Initially, Elisabeth Paul has studied textile design and has drawn design that were later woven or printed onto fabrics. »Looking for old, simple textiles brought me to felting inevitably«, she remembers. Next to her felt-photo collages Elisabeth Paul creates very filigree and transparent felt lamps.« The light lends vivacity to the fibres«, she says: »Transparency, surfaces and lines enter into play with each other.« When she is not working in her light-filled studio the artist likes to go to the theatre, in concerts and museums in order to broaden her horizon and to sharpen her own perspective. She is convinced: »A world without art would be colourless and poor. The love for art opens the door to the inner self.«

HELENE WEINOLD

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The Scent of Wool

Iveta Hruscova is fascinated by wool. For her fashion label Lavlna she creates exquisite, unique felted garments.

Actually, Iveta Hruscova wanted to open up a ceramics studio, but then she discovered feltmaking and succumbed to this passion within soon. In the meantime, the 44-year-old mother of two teenage girls has been working as a professional felt artists and markets her intricately made accessories under her own fashion label Lavlna.

~ In her home country, Slovakia, felt is deeply rooted as a material of the traditional male costume, she tells us. But the interest in her was sparked only when she saw a booth with colourful felted accessories at an arts and crafts fair in Barcelona. »I fell in love with feltmaking instantly and wanted to learn how to do it.«

~ That is why she took a course and continued to self-teach herself. The softness and pleasant smell of the sheep wool mesmerized her: »The fineness of

wool, the smell, the different colors and the many ways to combine it with other materials give me a feeling of happiness and fulfilment.«

A Year in Euphoria

Iveta Hruscova lived her first year as a feltmaker in a »state of euphoria«, as she describes. »At night the ideas would come, and I pondered over how to best realize them. During the day, I worked, often enough in trial and error periods. Steadily my hobby turned into a profession, and the plan to open a ceramics studio went into the background.«

~ The outcome of Iveta Hruscova's enthusiasm is a great variety of fashionable felt accessories, from handbags to scarves, stoles, hats and gloves. »This is a wearable art form that expresses the owner's femininity and uniqueness.« She completed her collection by smaller items like jewellery, small bags and »wonderfully smelling, felted-in soap bars.«

~ The Slovakian woman designs, apart from her fashion, home decoration and items for daily use like lamps, screens and images. »Once I covered sliding doors for a wardrobe with felt which turned into an atmospheric source of light.«

Nature Lover

Iveta Hruscova finds inspiration in her own inner self, but also in her surroundings, in her love for nature, architecture, other people and their history: »My work is the expression of my innermost self. A strong influence comes also from the floral motives you can find in the traditional costumes, ceramics and in traditional buildings especially in the more affluent regions of Slovakia.«

~ An idea for a project leads to a mind image that Iveta Hruscova then sketches on paper. She thinks a lot about how to actually make it before the real, creative working process starts.

~ Her way of working is explained by means of two examples: a stole and her bag collection with spikes. »In the making of the stole called »The Essence of a Woman's Soul« I have invested a lot of energy. A never-ending whirl heading towards darkness inside of each woman is connected with our inner light by a soft thread.«

~ The contrast and the harmony of sheep wool and silk that she used for the nuno felt of her stole are further enhanced by the alternating surfaces of both materials. »Natural wool has wonderful

insulating characteristics, it keeps you warm in winter and cool in summer. This makes it easy to create accessories that can be worn throughout the year«, the designer raves. But she also attaches a lot of value to the fact that her scarves and stoles can be worn in different ways: »They are long enough that you can wrap yourself inside them, you can combine them in summer with light dresses, in winter they complement an evening dress or set a colourful emphasis on a coat.« ~ Because Iveta Hruscova processes high quality Merino wool, silk chiffon and fibres and various synthetic fibers her stoles are very delicate and wonderfully soft. »Nothing scratches – it feels like a tender stroke.«

Mathematics in Felt

The people react very individually to Hruscova's spiked bags which, according to her, should give an insight in the soul of people with their own personal history. »Some are irritated by the spikes and their strong message, other fascinated by the fairy tale world that they associate with this design. A man was reminded of a feeding mother breast,« she reports. »A scientist once looked at the bags for twenty minutes and then said: 'This is unbelievable. You know, I have spent my whole life in the realms of mathematics and chemistry, but now I finally see how these two field can be represented figuratively.«

HELENE WEINOLD

Iveta Hruscova on the internet
www.lavlina.sk
www.facebook.com/lavlina/
Instagram: @_lavlna_

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A Comforting Sheath

A warming, protective cocoon that serves as an art object or one of daily use that can substitute a coffin after death was made by Annemie Koenen. The Dutch artist explains the history and meaning of her work »Lebensweg« (Life's Path)

For a long time, I had wanted to make a cocoon in one single piece. Since this takes up a lot of space and time I had to wait for the right moment, i.e. for periods where I did not have to travel that much.

The exhibition »Gehalten & Getragen« (Held and Worn) of the German Filz-Netzwerk offered the opportunity to make my wish come true.

☞ My inspiration for this piece is strongly rooted in Mother Earth, or Nature: the short-lived human being that turns into dust. In this cocoon I worked in the Kyrgyz »dog tail« pattern which symbolizes the connection between heaven and earth.

Several Stencils

The cocoon is entirely hand-made. After had I laid out the lower wool layering, I put the first stencil on top and placed the wool for the upper- and lower side there. Then followed the second stencil and on top of that the first side part with wool, then again, the third stencil and the wool for the second side part. Over two weeks I spent nearly 100 working hours on my cocoon »Life Path« which is more than two meters long.

☞ In the Netherlands it is allowed to be buried inside the cocoon, but emotionally, such an object should above all please the owner as an object of art as well as one for daily use.

A Feeling of Closeness

Felt is such a warm cover. When the time comes to say good-bye, such warmth is comforting. The feeling of being close to the deceased in his or her felted cocoon is different from putting the dear one in a wooden coffin. The contact remains direct. For the funeral, the cocoon holding the deceased can be put onto a wooden or willow stretcher.

ANNEMIE KOENEN

www.annemiekoenen.nl/troostvilt

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Please Touch!

Stephanie Metz's biomorphic sculptures are tortuously tempting. Made from white wool compressed into felt, the precise sharp angles and swelling folds and curves of her intriguingly textured forms beg to be touched. Typically, museum visitors are forbidden from giving in to the urge to feel the art – until now. The San Jose, California artist is working on a new project that invites the viewer to experience the artwork in a tactile way - and in the larger view, share social experiences in real time.

Metz is preparing for a 2020 solo exhibition at the de Saisset Museum at Santa Clara University that will debut her touchable human-sized wool and felt sculptures. Two galleries full of alluring objects are meant to be handled, manipulated, and rearranged by the public. The artist calls this project InTouch, to communicate not only the invitation to physically interact but to focus also on the idea of art as a way to connect people.

☞ The origins of the project grew out of Stephanie's observation: »At exhibition receptions I often invite the viewers hovering near my work to try touching it under my supervision. The reaction is most often an exclamation of delight and automatic turning to their neighbor to share the experience-- whether that neighbor is a friend or a total stranger.« Creating that kind of connection is at the core of her motivation in creating art.

☞ Viewers will initially encounter 'Holdable' sculptures filling most of the first gallery. Vaguely familiar organic and geometric shapes constructed from thick stitched industrial felt, Holdables may at first glance resemble stone or metal. Rounded, angular, squat, elegant, blocky, and hollowed shapes will suggest actions or uses, placing physical and interpretive demands on the viewer in a highly individual experience. Visual cues including mirrors on the walls and rugs on the floor will invite audiences to touch, hold, arrange, and get personal with the forms. Along two walls in the same gallery 'Shape Sheets' can be creatively positioned by participants to create three-dimensional forms out of two-dimensional sheets of felt.

☞ After the more boisterous first gallery space that welcomes audiences to get past their hesitation about touching art in a museum, the second gallery presents a more meditative experience. The 'Hanging Pods' will be twelve mysterious white cocoon-like human-sized objects hanging in a dense group with enough space for people to walk among them, presented in the darkened gallery space and lit from above. Covered in white felted wool, variations in their shapes, surface textures, weight, and solidity will reward curious participants with satisfying haptic information-gathering. Audiences can trace their hands over soft but dense wool formed into plump bulges that give way to firm ridges, puckers and scaly patterns that are more felt than seen as the suspended heavy masses gently sway in response to pressure.

☞ Stephanie Metz elaborates: »I think a fair number of people feel really intimidated by art in museums and galleries: they don't feel like they understand, and they don't want to feel or look stupid. I hope this work will be approachable, both physically and conceptually.«

☞ To accommodate the size of the new work Stephanie Metz moved into a larger studio space and for the first time she has employed studio assistants and even invited volunteers into her studio for 'Felting Parties' to help cover the stitched forms in felt. »I was unsure how Felting Parties would play out-- quickly training and then arming an unknown quantity of beginners with sharp tools to work on my sculpture? But I needn't have worried. Just like my workshops, felting parties attract kindred spirits: enthusiastic helpers who just clicked with each other and the spirit of connection that characterizes this project. I can't frankly remember where the idea for Felting Parties came from-- all I know is that this project would be impossible without all this help.«

☞ If you'd like to follow her progress, get involved, or support the InTouch project you can visit her website, www.stephaniemetz.com, or follow her instagram account @stephanie_metz_sculpture.

PAGE 48-49

Have an Eye on Earth

»Keep Your Eye on the Planet« is the motto of a competition where embroidered eye images are integrated in handcrafted art objects. The results can be seen in a touching exhibit and a beautiful gallery book.

You are watched from expressive eyes in the total of 45 textile works, each of them having brought together two women of different cultures. Afghan embroiderers have embroidered eyes for the Guldusi Program (see box) in the format 8 cm x 8 cm. European women have integrated these unique embroideries in their own textile art objects for the competition »Keep Your Eye on the Planet«. »The jury's choice was not easy«, admits the project's chairwoman, Pascale Goldenberg. The chosen 45 objects will be shown during a travelling exhibit at different cities over the next few months.

Difficult Translation

The translation of »Keep Your Eye on the Planet« into the German language is not easy. The meaning is a consciously watchful, committed and also actively protective action for our planet. The organizers agreed on the German translation »Hüte den Planeten wie deinen Augapfel!«, which means »Take care of the planet as if it were the apple of your eye!« Most objects focused on ecological aspects. In the works »Love your Planet« (Alarçon) und »Save the Bees« (Fors) the attention is drawn towards the animal world and the extinction of animal species. Others, like »The Tree« (Douillet) concentrate on the plant kingdom, sometimes in a provocative manner, then again rather poetic.

Handmade Felt of Karakul Wool

With many contributions, the titles are programmatic, like in »Müll kann man nicht essen« (You cannot eat garbage) (Heimann) or in »Where has all the plastic gone?« (Röhr). The pragmatic order »Save the Planet« (Jakob) addresses the viewer directly, asking for immediate action. All textile techniques are represented. With hand-made felts from Merino and Karakul wool, embroidered with copper wire and metal yarns Irene Reinhardt has made her »hunger belt«, the subject of which is Afghanistan's plight. »Due to the drought periods the country is threatened with economic ruin, since grass and water resources are not sufficient for Afghan sheep, they die. In the »hunger belt« the desertification is responsible for the loss of economic livelihood.«

~ In her art work called »Ressourcen« (Resources) Sylvia Tischer deals with a similar matter, inspired by Mahatma Gandhi's saying »Earth provides enough to satisfy every man's needs, but not every man's greed.«

Care for Fellow Human Beings

Care for fellow human beings is also symbolized in some objects, for instance in »The Freedom Dreamers« (Phuong Coulot) or »Give a face to the people« (Charlotte Heuel) that tackle the migration issue. The both delicate and technically flawless art work of the latter has convinced the organizers to the extent that it was chosen for the cover of the gallery book showing the exhibition pieces in detail and in full. The textile work depictions are enriched by many short stories from Afghanistan which convey the country's traditions and

reality. Also, Persian poems and proverbs kindle interest and understanding for this different part of the world.

PASCAL GOLDENBERG
www.guldusi.com

The Gallery Book

*Pascale Goldenberg
Keep Your Eye on the Planet
Gallery book, trilingual
(German, English, French)
192 pages, hardcover with
thread-stitching, 22.00 €
ISBN 978-3-87512-555-9
It can be ordered at Guldusi or
directly at the publisher's:
www.maroverlag.de/16-textilkunst*

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Woolly Nesting Support

The coarse wool of the Heidschnucke Sheep gave Catrin Porsiel the idea to felt a nesting place for birds. Here she shares her first experiences.

The silky, soft curls of the Gotland Pelt Sheep led me to knitting design. That the herder is the oldest profession in human history came to my mind again when I visited a heath herder recently who kept his eye on a huge Heidschnucke flock, as if he had just stepped out of paradise. ~ His flock had a kind of odd, magical attraction on me and so I planned to make a Schnucke project after my Karakul project from two years ago. The wool of the Heidschnucke, however, was a lot coarser and longer than I had expected. Therefore, I decided to lay out the wool for tits in my garden as nest material and to felt a nesting place. I had seen on previous occasions that sheep wool is in high demand for nesting material. A daring tit stole the beards of 20 dwarves during the nesting season once.

Getting Rid of Long Hair

It is important for both laying out and felting to use only the underwool of the Schnucken. These hairs have a length of approx. 5 cm which makes them easy to felt, and they present also no danger for the birds. The long hair that bear a similarity to the long hair in the horse's tail have to be discarded by all

means. Several birds have been known to strangle themselves with fibres of that length when they build the nest.

~ I have felted the prototype over an old, wooden hat model from France which is slightly oval. By means of this first little den I gathered experience that I can use for making more in the future.

~ The felting was really easy and fast, since the Heidschnucke wool has good felting qualities. That single hair bristle, as can be seen on the photos, was to be expected, the wool being really coarse. But this bristly look is part of the design.

Stability is Important

The felt of my first nesting place is 1 cm thick, but for future projects I would go for a thickness of up to 3 cm. This turns out advantageous for the stability, temperature regulation and weight. The slight structure is dangling in the wind, so that the birds have to aim well when they want to land. To avoid a too strong swinging, lest the birds should get seasick, I felted a slip made by simple rolling and fastened a stone onto it that decreases the pendulum effect.

~ In order to make the place attractive for certain kinds of birds you should keep an eye on the different sizes of entry holes required. The Naturschutzbund Deutschland (NABU) recommends a hole diameter of 26 to 28 mm for most kinds of tits, for great tits 32 mm. NABU advises strongly against putting on a sitting bar which would make it easier for cats and other prowlers to catch the birds.

Attention, Cats!

A felted breeding place is very attractive for cats, so please hang it high enough so that cats, martens and other prowlers cannot reach it. It should not swing freely in the wind, and the entrance hole should look neither to the west, the so called »weather side« nor in the full sun. Instead of a little bar to sit on when the bird lands I felted a kind of stair. For future nesting projects I will make it thicker. Since May, the felted nest hangs in a larch in the »forest corner« of my garden. No bird has moved in yet, I should have installed it much earlier. But the tits have tousled the object and love to pick on it. It is certainly worthwhile to experiment further!

CATRIN PORSIEL
www.verlockend.eu

Wallis Blacknose

History

The sheep breed Wallis Blacknose has probably been in existence since the 15th century. Their origin, as their name says, is the canton Wallis in Switzerland.

☞ By cross-breeding with other sheep the Wallis Sheep has changed in terms of the wool and meat yield in the last centuries. While the sheep in Wallis were mainly kept by the farmers for their own wool, meat, leather and occasionally milk consumption until the first half of the 20th century, the sheepkeeping as a hobby or side job has come to the fore since then. That, too, has had an effect on the looks of the Wallis Blacknose sheep. In order to keep the workload for the shearing as light as possible the sheep were bred in such a way that faces and legs should hardly have hairs. Sideline- and hobby shepherds, on the contrary, focus more on the aesthetics. The trend with modern Wallis Blacknoses goes toward hairy faces and legs.

☞ The Oberwallis Blacknose sheep breeders' association was founded in 1948. Only 1962 the Wallis Blacknose was officially acknowledged as a race and registered in the Swiss Sheep Breeders' Association in 1964 (Source: Wikipedia)

Description

The Wallis Blacknose is a mountain sheep with good »motherly« characteristics, milk and meat yields. It is sturdy and well adapted to the harsh conditions of the scraggy high mountain areas. Those sheep are good climbers and rather frugal. Both sexes are horned, and their bodies are covered with wool. Characteristic is the black wool on the head, ears, front knees and feet, the rest of the body is white. The head is short with a wide mouth and a ram's nose. Full-grown ewes weigh 70 to 90 kg, rams 80 to 125 kg.

Wool

Wool Yield 3–4,5 kg
Fineness: > 36 Mikron
Batch length about 10–15 cm

Felting Characteristics

☞ For the trial samples two different parts of wool were used: A fine one from the back (left) and a coarse one from the belly (right).

☞ From each kind each 3 g and 10 g of unwashed material was used and laid out always on a surface of 20 x 20 cm.

Result after making the samples:		
	Wool of the Back Part	
Size before felting:	3g	20 x 20 cm
	10g	20 x 20 cm
Size after felting:	3g	8 x 8 cm
	10g	13 x 13 cm
Weight after felting:	3g	2,4 g
	10g	8,2 g
Shrinkage:	3g	2,5
	10g	1,53
	Wool from the Belly Part	
Size before felting:	3 g	20 x 20 cm
	10 g	20 x 20 cm
Size after felting:	3 g	10 x 10 cm
	10 g	14,5 x 14,5 cm
Weight after felting:	3 g	2,4 g
	10 g	7,4 g
Shrinkage:	3 g	2,0
	10 g	1,37

Washed Test Sample 3 g, laid out 20 cm x 20 cm and felted	
Size after felting	8 cm x 8 cm
Weight after felting:	2,9 g
Shrinkage:	2,5

Conclusion

The wool of the Wallis Blacknose is rather coarse and wiry. The finer part felted and thickened well, opposed to that the coarse part did not. At a close look the felt made from the Wallis Blacknose wool is not smooth but shows bristly fibers which renders the felt rather scratchy and rough. This wool is rather unsuitable for garments and items where high density and stability are required. For interior decoration objects, on the other hand, the Wallis sheep wool is highly recommended, e.g. its fleece for a felted fur with a well-felting cover below. The washed wool responds exceptionally well to plant and acid dyes.

SUSANNE BREULING

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Nativity Scene

The crib figurines of Susanne Schächter-Heil's Nativity scene are wet-felted in the structural technique. Shepherds or the three magi can be added to the central characters following the same principle.

In many families it is a much beloved custom to present a crib at Christmas

time. Crib figurines are as colorful and various as the places where they are put. In some families the crib figurines have been collected and admired for decades, often they are heirlooms. But with a lot of families the space under the Christmas tree remains empty. Our suggestion therefore: Felt yourself a Christmas crib. ☞ Here I show you how Mary, Joseph, the angel and baby Jesus in the manger are made. They are wet-felted in a structural technique. These basic techniques can be transferred to all other figurines, shepherds, the three magi or other visitors. ☞ The colours of the wool used here are only suggestions. Of course, it is possible to felt the nativity scene in natural wool colours. The technique works with almost any kind of wool and/or colour. ☞ Start your felting path to the finished crib with a sketch how big the figures should become. I proceed after the formula height of the figurine = arm span width. The Mary presented here is 17 cm high, therefore you measure from fingertip to fingertip 17 cm. The height is divided by 7 and the result is the height of the head. In our case, the finished head (without the hairdo) is 2.4 cm high. In this manner the proportions are respected, and the actual felting can be better prepared. This formula can be used for any size.

Material

- ∞ Stainless Wire
- ∞ Merino wool, skin-coloured in the fleece, 19-22 Micron
- ∞ Fleece wool, white and coloured, for the bodies
- ∞ Eventually needle fleeces for the cloaks (but these can be made with your own pre-felts)
- ∞ Roving or wool curls for hair
- ∞ Silk fibres
- ∞ Golden embroidery yarn

Accessories

Pliers, scissors, felting needle, tray, anti-slip pad, soap, ball sprinkler, impact sound insulation foil, towel, bubble foil and sewing kit.

Instructions Lamb

The structural technique is demonstrated in the making of a lamb lying on the ground.

1. Take 10 to 15 g white fleece wool, depending on the desired size. From one half of the wool roll a firm body and a smaller roll for the head. The rest of the wool is divided into small flakes. Then prepare warm soapy water.
2. Put the head roll onto the body and moisten the parts thoroughly.
3. Then both parts should be connected by the wool flakes. Don't forget to wet them! The soap serves as glue.
4. When you are satisfied with the proportions, pull at the ears of the lamb. The ends are cut from below and a wool flake is wound around each.
5. Now it is possible to felt and finish the form.
6. When the little figurine is stable, and you are pleased with its shape rinse the lamb and let it dry. Who wants can needle curls onto it after the drying process. Nose and eyes can be embroidered or put on with the felting needle. *By the way:* Sheep can be integrated into the crib in every size and number. It is an easy pleasure for children.

Crib Figurines

1. First measure the wire for the arm structure. If Mary is 17 cm tall take 30 to 32 cm of wire. Make a bow in the middle where later the head is fastened.

At each end the wire is bent so that the ends are neat.

2. Prepare about 20 g of skin-coloured wool. Wrap dry wool around the hands. In order to do this, unbend the wire, wind wool around it and bend it anew, so it stays invisible. The pull a big wool flake through the head loop.

3. Have a bowl handy with warm soapy water. The wool flakes are laid on dry by degree, watered and smoothed out. Take care that the wool is always laid on dry, only afterwards it should be moistened with soapy water. Wet flakes do not place well. Build a ball for the head in this matter, plus hands and arms. Turn the work piece around again and again and build up on the backside as well.

4. The head in its wet state should have a height of maximum 4 cm. Shortly before the desired height and circumference are reached put two small wool rolls as forehead and chin lines onto the head. Then put a wool strand of approx. 20 cm lengthwise over the head so you have a starting point for the body.

5. You should only start to felt when the proportions are correct. To felt means that first the surface is closed - carefully and without too much pressure, which requires some patience. Make a picking test: Only when the surface fibers cannot be lifted anymore you can devote yourself to the form. Now the head can be formed, the eye lines enhanced, and the upper build-up shrunk.

6. Then build the body with approx. 50 g of white wool in this three-dimensional way. First, a wool surface of approx. 20 cm height and 10 cm width is wound around the skin-colored appendage vertically, then the arms should be laid with wool.

7. Now the piece is wetted and smoothed out. On this basis continue to build up the body, always keeping the backside in mind and form the bottom. The body should have a cylindrical form. Before felting, the figurine should have a height of 20 cm and a bottom circumference of at least 22 cm.

8. Only now you should start felting and bringing the body into form. Keep an eye on the bottom base, and measure if required.

9. At the end of the felting process lift a small nose out of the felted surface of the face and shape it.

10. When the »blank« is finished rinse it well. Don't press otherwise the figurine will lose its shape. Only pour water over it several times, let it drip off and dry it afterwards.

11. Now Mary gets a dress and a cloak. Since here she is about to get a red dress and red wool tends to bleed out I recommend to work over a stencil separately.

12. Lay out the stencil in front and back with wool without the arms. When the garment is firmly felted make the neckline and re-felt the edges. Rinse the dress well. Then Mary can try it on.

13. For the cloak use a piece of blue pre-felt (width 20 cm and height 22 cm). Make it round on one broadside and felt the cloak to a width and height of 18 cm.

14. In the same order you can make Joseph and an angel.

15. Our Joseph here is about 20 cm tall. Since his blank was made of beige mountain sheep wool his garment can be felted directly onto it. I recommend basting the garment with the felting needle briefly before the wet-felting starts.

16. Next to a cloak, that is made in the same fashion as Mary's, Joseph needs a hat. Here we work with a previously prepared stencil. The hat has to be bigger than the naked head, since even grey hair do have a certain kind of specific volume.

17. While Joseph and the angel dry the latter's wings can be felted. You need about 6 g of wool and white silk fibers. At the angel's height of about 20 cm you need a round felted surface of about 15 cm. This means that the wool should be distributed on a circle of approx. 24 cm diameter. Lay the biggest part of the wool along the middle axis and leave the edges thin. When felting, this leads to a slight lift of the edges and the middle part gets more stable in order to be sewed on. Work here on the bubble foil by all means!

18. The finished surface is cut out in the form of a heart and then

divided on the pointed end. Re-felt the cutting edges, rinse, pull them into form and let them dry.

19. Before we start finishing the figurines, we felt a manger over a stencil that has the form of a circle and a triangle. Put three layers of wool thinly onto the stencil. Afterwards, when felting, the moment comes when the stencil gets too big. Then cut the piece open at the lower straight edge and pull the stencil out. The round »head« is put over to the inside. The result is a manger where baby Jesus can lie.

20. Baby Jesus starts with a wool knot. From this knot shape a head, the rest of the wool makes the small body.

21. After wetting with soapy water, the tiny figurine is sheathed in white merino and carefully felted.

22. For the finishing keep yarns and the wool meant for the hair ready.

23. Then embroider the faces with the gold yarn and needle on their respective hairdos (always starting at the back of the head). Sew the wings on the angel's back. Mary gets her cloak now. Make small cuts for the arms at the shoulder width. Joseph's cloak is simply tied around.

24. We wish you a lot of fun and success in making the manger – and a Merry Christmas!

INSTRUCTIONS AND PHOTOS:
SUSANNE SCHÄCHTER-HEIL
www.wollwerkerin.de

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Kyrgyzstan: Felt Embroideries

During their many study trips, István Vidák and Mary Nagy discovered, amongst many other things, richly embroidered felted objects. They listened to the stories pertaining to this ancient way of decorating.

Kyrgyzstan, this beautiful mountain country we visited first in 2002 and from then on yearly until today. On each trip we

discovered new facets of popular art and above all feltmaking. Embroidered felts, for instance, have led a rather shadowy existence, but it is ultimately worthwhile to pay closer attention to them.

Decorated Objects for Daily Use

The women liked to make a valuable, big textile for the matrimonial bed, made from cotton, velvet or silk, which they embroidered lavishly. The name for it is »Tusch kijis«, which means that it used to be made from felt.

☞ From a Kyrgyz woman we heard the following story: »Time and again you find nine embroidered circles on this object that we interpret as the sun. We assume that the woman who had sewed it for months expressed her emotions and dreams during the work. The circles are similar, but each »month circle« has a different meaning. The embroiderer nourishes the memory of her pregnancy. The triangle in the middle, in Kyrgyz 'Tumar', is a protective symbol.«

☞ Next to many other textile and embroidered treasures we were able to admire this unique felted specimen in the textile collection of Nurbübü Musajeva in Kotschkor. A second of its kind is in the capital Bishkek in the National Museum Archive.

☞ When you travel in the south of Kyrgyzstan in the direction of the Fergana valley you will find that not only the vegetation and climate but also the textiles differ from those of the north. So we found richly embroidered felted wall hangings in the city museum in Osh. The people there call them »Sajma kijis«, literally translated meaning »embroidered felt«. The woman making it is called »Sajmatschü«. The felted surface consists of several parts sewn together, from the middle out in natural brown, white and red dyed with madder. These wall hangings, about 120 cm x 250 cm, were most likely made in between the two World Wars and entered the museum collection in the 1980ies.

☞ The wool yarn for the embroideries in the colours yellow, blue, green, red, violet and black was plant-dyed. Further beautiful, old showpieces can be found in the Museum of Applied Art in Bishkek. Ornamental stitches and patterns differ from one wall hanging to the next, some examples are shown in the drawings.

Clothes Bag and Saddle Blanket

☞ The most commonly used item in a yurt was the clothes bag, in Kyrgyz »Bastük«. A herder's family owned several of them, and they were all beautifully embroidered.

☞ A similar, but smaller form for teacups is called »Ajak kap«. Prayer rugs also made from embroidered felt (Djaj namas), sweat blankets below the horse's saddle (Er tokum) and the Kyrgyz variant of the potholder: a pair of embroidered gloves (Tut kutsch) to hold the hot pan is the smallest embroidered object for daily use that we encountered.

A Shelf Made from Fabrics

One of these objects we would like to introduce in more detail: »Tektsche«, a kind of shelf made from fabrics. When you step into the yurt you see such a shelf on the left, which is the man-side, and one left at the woman's side.

☞ In the olden days the Tektsche was fulfilled thinly from delicate wool and plant-dyed. The outer part was embroidered with plant-dyed wool yarn. Each corner of the Tektsche has a loop.

The two below are fastened in the lattice grate, the upper two in the roof poles. When the felted part is hung loosely a depression forms where the precious headgears can be safely kept. We have heard that also the family money was put in a satchel next to the man's hat and the woman's jewelry next to her hood or bonnet on the other side.

☞ We have studied an example of such a beautiful old Tektsche in Kotschkor. Nurbübü Musajeva explained the meaning of the embroidery as follows: »In the middle you see two yurts on the mountain summer pastures. Inside women and men sit around the fireplace and talk. It is springtime, a brook meanders through the meadows. On its bank beautiful coloured flowers grow, the prettiest being the red tulips. The Tektsche is not embroidered below, since life never ends and is carried forth through the children.«

☞ Nurbübü Musajeva's Tektsche in the format 65 cm x 95 cm is felted from dark-brown country sheep wool and weighs 700 g. The felt is 5 mm thick. The front part is embroidered with hand-spun, twisted wool yarn in different colours, here white, red, orange and violet. A talented woman had chosen three ornamental stitches: the flat stitch (Ilme saima) for the contour line, the chain stitch (Djormömö) in two colours and the filling stitch (Basma) in order to fill out the motifs.

Man's Hat and White Hood

For the Kyrgyz people, the most important body part is the head, hence great value and emphasis are put on

headgears. The men wear a felted hat, a »Kalpak« and the women a white hood made from fabrics called »Elitschek«. Both headgears are very valuable. They carry symbolic meaning and are kept at privileged places in the yurt.

MARI NAGY UND ISTVÁN VIDÁK
IN CO-OPERATION WITH TRUDI JANKER

PAGE 60-61

White Gold and Blue Skies

European women gather new felting experiences during a trip to Mongolia.

With the adopted composure of the Mongolian nomads, Beate, Beatrice and Ina sit in front of their yurt sewing their Sirmak. The weather is splendid, the surroundings, the »Alp« as we call it, alike, the women are friendly and the children curious. On one of our stations of our sustainable felting trip through Mongolia we learn about the making of such a carpet and make a trial specimen ourselves.

∞ In this part of the world, the carpet, the upper part of which is made of two different-colored felts, is called Sirmak. The motif »ram's horn« is cut out and in-laid alternately – the light pattern in the dark, the dark pattern in the light felt. With a strong, thin thread we sew the parts together. Then camel hair has to be spun. With this yarn we quilt the carpet, which requires a lot of patience and is hardship for the fingers. So that the carpet says thick and sturdy a further layer

of felt is put underneath and again sewn up. At the end the edges are chained on.

Carpets Show Affluence

These thick carpets of which we have made a trial pattern lie on the naked floor as warming covers in the yurts. The number of carpets, like that of the cattle, demonstrate how well off a family is. Usually each mother gives each child such a carpet when it gets married.

Different Cultures

Our »sustainable felt journey« led us to different cultures and people in Mongolia, to Kazakhs and Mongolians. We learned a lot about the different makings of felted products, we lived and worked together with the families. In the capital Ulaanbaatar we visited a felt manufacturing plant.

Fulling by Horsepower

Two hours by car outside the capital we were privy to watch felting with the help of horses in the Mongolian steppe. They pull long felt rolls after themselves, fulling them. In this traditional way many felted parts for yurts (Ger) are still being made.

∞ We in turn flogged raw wool in order to full a carpet kneeling on the earth. On the next day we sewed a small Shirdak under the instruction of our host. Together we felted an image as well: Mongolians, Germans, a Swiss lady, Austrians and a man from Japan who was also a guest of the Nomads. Felt is really connecting internationally!

Felting Without Soap

Accompanied by the director of a »Wool Craft Centre« in the city we learned how women process in groups or at home the wool of their sheep, their »white gold«,

into contemporaneous products. Since water is scarce in Mongolia the felting takes place without soap, thus a lot of rinsing water is saved.

∞ We greatly enjoyed the trip. In the evenings we sat around the small oven in the yurt, tasted the simple but delicious meals, drank the daily milk tea, hiked around, played with the children, tried to count the animals, and of course felted and sewed.

Great Hospitality

When we made our own felted objects that we wanted to take home the helpfulness of our female hosts was overwhelming. The women left their own chores or postponed them, or they got help from a neighbour or relative.

∞ In order to give something back in return for all the friendliness and assistance I felted balls with the children and showed the women how felting is done in Europe. So, at the river we made a carpet in the Mongolian and a cushion in the European way.

∞ Not only we wanted to see, experience and learn something new, also the women in Mongolia have every right to do so. We wanted to contribute to the honour in which the traditional techniques and motifs are held, as is the precious natural material wool growing on the back of the many pasturing animals. The latter deserves to be held in the highest esteem, because this symbolizes Mongolia for us: Blue skies – white gold!

ELISABETH SCHIEMER
www.wollgartl.at

*The next felting trip to Mongolia is scheduled for August 2019.
Information: office@wollgartl.at*

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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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