

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #63

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Dear Readers,

Hot summer days are meant to be spent at the pool or the nearest lake. At least that is what the felted female figures presented in this issue seem to think. Tanja Kahl designs her voluptuous Fat Ladies with loving detail and endows them with an exuberant and healthy self-assurance. Tent-like dresses or billowy robes, no thanks! These well-rounded beauties show off their curves in fancy bathing suits and bikinis as of page 32.

Precious, never-fading sunflowers are created by the American artist Kristy Kun, whose portrait you will find as of page 26. She has invented a special technique of shaping blossoms from pre-felt strips which she winds up into a roll and fixes with a felting needle before the wet-felting process. On pages 30/31 she gives detailed step-by-step instructions.

Felt not only connects wool fibers but people as well. Feltmaker and lecturer Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann from Düsseldorf was duly prompted to start her own »Couchsurfing Group« on the internet. Felters from all over the world can offer overnight stays there or look for a sleeping place at a like-minded colleague. How this works you can read on page 48.

Many like-minded felt enthusiasts are drawn to the annual events and meetings. This time, about 100 feltmakers met in Bad Schandau near the German-Czech border to exchange experiences, plan and prepare projects and, of course, to felt together. On pages 8/9 we report about the meeting under the motto »Felting at the Limit«.

During the pre-courses held before the Bad Schandau meeting (see pages 10-13) many attractive skirts were made, hand puppets looking like fish, raw wool objects and hats. Annemie Koenen's comfy and easy to make HatCap with its rolled-up edge was copied a dozen times in many imaginative modifications. From page 56 on she gives detailed instructions. We have tried it: The HatCap from finest Merino-silk roving is ready in a couple of hours, pleasant to wear and won't take it badly when it is crumpled up and stuck into a coat pocket.

Most feltmakers are animal-lovers. This is proven for example by the lively feedback to our subject »felted nests« (see page 49). But animal love does not extend to all creatures: Moths are definitely nothing but a pest. Corinna Nitschmann tells us on pages 42/43 how bravely she attacked and mastered the moth and larvae problem. In that sense, we wish you all a creative felting summer and permanently moth-free wool!

*With kindest regards
Your filzfun team*

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de
The autumn issue will be published on
August 30th, 2019.
Editorial deadline: June 15th, 2019.

Special Jubilee Show

With a special show the Nadel & Faden in Osnabrück celebrates its »silver« anniversary in the middle of September: The textile art and craft fair takes place from 13th to 15th September 2019 for the 25th time. Project manager Ellen Moschitz-Finger invites interested parties to make womens' images themed: »Dies Bildnis ist bezaubernd schön«. (The beginning of an aria of Mozart's »Magic Flute« tells us about the spectacular beauty of the beloved's image) for a special show. The objects can be made of all kinds of textile materials and techniques in the high format 30 cm x 40 cm. Submission date is the June 29th 2019.

www.nadelundfaden-osnabrueck.de

Felt Exhibit and Study Trip to Armenia

Almost 100 year-old felted carpets, ancient shepherds' cloaks and household items made from felt, but also new felt art created by Armenian felt artists and the Hungarian textile artist István Vidák are on show in the Armenian Museum for Ethnographics in Sardarapat near Jerewan as of September 14th to the middle of October. The exhibit will be further complemented by handicraft demonstrations, a market and traditional Armenian dances.

∞ For the opening, István Vidák and the Armenian felt artist Lala Mnayan offer an eight-day textile study trip to Armenia as of September 16th 2019. The participants will be shown important places and premises connected with the craft and can add on or deepen their own impressions left by the exhibit. Information and application via e-mail: vidak.istvan47@gmail.com

Perishable Felt Art

Nine graduates of last year's graduation program at the Oberrot Felting School call themselves »Das Filzkollektiv (The Felting Collective)«: Alexandra Schmidt, Anne Rau, Anne Weinkauff-Esser, Evelyne Carcaterra, Jana von Janso, Karin Müller, Melanie Mesli, Monika Willmes and

Verena Frei. Under the artistic supervision of Lyda Rump they show felt art themed »vergänglich – lebendig (perishable – alive)« in the Schlosspark and Friedwald Pansevitz near Gingst/Kluis on the island Rügen as of June 2nd 2019. People visiting the castle park will experience nature as a deft designer which changes the felted objects over time.

<https://stiftung-schlosspark-pansevitz.de/veranstaltungen/>

Learning and Working

Helping hands are always welcome in the studio of the Dutch felt artist Annemie Koenen in Sittard. Who wants to learn something new and gather practical experience pays for one day only in the five-day course program »Helping Hands«. The remaining four days are free of charge and consist of courses (half of the day) and helping out in the studio (the other half), for example with carding or felting.

www.annemiekoenen.nl

Toads and Knitwear

Even the bronze toads at the famous toad fountain are fond of knitwear during the Oppenheim Wollfest on July 1st and 2nd 2019. The Wollfest, formerly held in Schwabsburg, with a big market for materials, utensils and tools for knitting, crocheting, felting and spinning and many interesting workshops takes place this year in Oppenheim for the second time.

www.oppenheimer-wollfest.de

Summer Felting Days

From techniques for surface design to experiments in nuno felt and figurines or hand puppets in structural design and jewelry – all this and more can be made during the Summer Felting Days in the educational center Schloss Retzhof in Styria (Austria) from August 10th through 18th. The felt designers Michaela Kunzfeld, Barbara Steffen-Munzberg and Susanne Schächter-Heil invite beginners and advanced feltmakers to plan their individual course day(s). Detailed information and application:

<https://filznetzwerk.de/index.php/event/10-18-08-2019-sommerfilztage-retzhof-oesterreich/>

Felting at the Border

Communal work, exchange of experiences, courses and exhibits at the feltmakers' meeting in Bad Schandau

Shortly before the Czech border, in the so-called Saxon Switzerland, about one hundred felt enthusiasts from all over Germany, The Netherlands and Austria met at the occasion of the 24th feltmakers' encounter in the Ostrau youth hostel high above Bad Schandau. The program was as varied and interesting as the surrounding landscape was impressive. Claudia Blickling, Annette Quentin-Stoll, Edeltraud Kleiner, Beate Brudek, Ariane Flick, Carola Zeiger and Gabriel Leithaus had organized the event under the ambiguous title »Filzen an der Grenze« (Felting at the Border, could also be read as Felting at its Limit). Further themes were provided under the headings »Limitless Freedom«, »Open Borders« »Go to the Limit« and »Clearly defined and all correct« (originally »Grenzenlose Freiheit«, »Offene Grenzen«, »Bis an die Grenze gehen« und »Klar begrenzt und ganz korrekt«)

∞ A couple of days before the official meeting approx. 50 feltmakers took part in the pre-courses offered by Heidi Greb, Sabine Reichert-Kassube, Annette Quentin-Stoll and Annemie Koenen teil (see pages 10-13).

Embroidered Fish

For the introduction in the evening all participants had brought small felt works along serving as their »calling cards«, amongst others a hand-felted dragon, an intricately embroidered ball, a paisley ornament and a pair of tiny dwarf shoes, all of which were hung up on a string in the recreation room. Felted fish in all colors invited to be lovingly embroidered, decorated with beads or sequined and were then carried either as name tags, brooches or key rings.

∞ On the following day free-style felting took place. Funny little bunnies were made, Easter nests and rattling eggs, but also cushions, blossoms, scarves and many, many bags in all sizes, from a miniature purse to a clutch that was complemented with handles made by Monika Derrix and Annemie Koenen. No such pleasurable work goes without the lively exchange of personal experiences and valuable advice and this meeting was no exception.

Course Guidelines

At the annual general meeting of the Filz Netzwerk the members decided to work in committees in the future in order to promote felting in the public sphere, in therapy, with children and in the regional groups. It was further agreed upon elaborating a quality guideline for felting courses. Chairwoman Susanne Schächter-Heil und treasurer Barbara Steffen-Munsberg were confirmed in their office for another two years.

The creative felting potential slumbering in Eastern Germany was brought to light during an exhibition in the NaturparkZentrum in Bad Schandau, where felt artists from the whole of Saxonia showed their art.

With two guided hikes through the picturesque landscape of the Elbe sandstone mountains the encounter ended on a most pleasing note.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 10-13

Room for Experiments

Four pre-courses to introduce the feltmakers' meeting in Saxon Switzerland

The participating feltmakers could choose from four exciting themes, all hosted by high-class teachers during three fully booked courses before the 24th feltmakers' encounter in Bad Schandau. »Border Swimming – Dolls with Scales« was the motto of Annette Quentin-Stoll's course. »Limitless Temptation« Heidi Greb called hers, where the participants experimented with the raw wool of different kinds of sheep. How skirts from fabric and wool can be felted on relatively small tables was demonstrated by Sabine Reichert-Kassube and headgear ranging from casual to festive were made under the tutelage of Annemie Koenen.

From Sheep to Fish

Course (also) regarding elastic structures with Annette Quentin-Stoll

∞ The river Elbe being within sight it was only natural that fish played a role in this year's felt encounter. The aim of the three-day course was to felt fish that can be played with as hand puppets. Since not every fish is like the other, the first day was dedicated to the patterns and trail pieces for scales, fins and eyes. As

material for the test pre-felts fine Merino in fleece was used. Special highlights could be achieved by roving or other fibers. For the scales alone there are three variants:

Pre-felt onto Pre-felt: Single scales were cut out from colorful pre-felts and arranged in rows on a further piece of pre-felt.

Reserve technique: On the wool laid out for the fish's body, pieces of fabrics or contrasting fibers are laid out and partially covered with stencils before the outer wool layer is put on. After fulling, the stencils are removed and the felt is cut into the shape of scales.

Elastic Structure: The pre-felt is topstitched with tearproof yarn and a lot of patience to form a bow. All threads are pulled very taut which will result in contracting. After the fulling, drying and removing of the threads you have elastic, round fins.

We made different fish eyes by inserting glass marbles or glass stones: bigger ones, smaller ones, round or oval, with or without lashes. So each fish had its own individual facial expression.

At the end they needed fins: For this we learned two methods:

Hollow form: By means of a stencil the fin will be worked into the surface felt in such a manner that you can put your finger in it from the back – they should become hand puppets after all!

Elastic Structure: A pre-felt is topstitched in stripes this time, again pull the threads really taut. Then the work piece should be felted and fullled, whereby a durable fold structure can be achieved.

From all the many details we were taught, each of the ten participants make her own fish, in one case even a bag with scales and a fish eye. All were really colorful and the making was great fun. In her attentive, open and quiet ways, Annette Quentin-Stoll answered all our questions and found a solution for every problem.

BETTINA CASPARI

Temptation and Fantasy

A raw wool course with Heidi Greb

For a long time, I had wanted to attend a course by Heidi Greb, who is a specialist for raw wool. My expectations were thus

huge concerning the three-day course »Limitless Temptation«.

∞ In a small room in the youth hostel it smelled wonderfully of sheep – warm and pristine. Added were water and soap, talk and inspiration – a great mixture indeed. Heidi Greb has a lot of sensitivity as a teacher and kindled our imagination with a tableful of trial pieces early in the morning. ∞ With different kinds of wool, she had brought from her own stock, from local Saxon Gotland sheep or from fleeces provided by the participants we tried first to lay out the curls in different ways and felt them – in part rather trying for the patience!

In the course of the evening Heidi Greb's patterns vanished from the table and ours took their place. They were very interesting as well, each with a personal note, multiplying further our ideas. The next days – and sometimes long evenings as well – each course member spent according to her liking either in our workroom or sometimes even outside in the wonderful early spring weather. We could always rely on Heidi Greb's nice and discreet support and assistance for the realization of our ideas which grew more and more. The common, inspiring work was met with my special enthusiasm: Where on earth could I find other like-minded people who start to rave at the sight of unwashed, sticky Skudde curls? The final show under the big tree in the yard of the hostel Ostrau ranged from many more experimental test pieces to cushions, felted furs, caps, collars, art objects and bracelets – surely a limitless temptation to keep on!

BIRGIT BLUMRICH

Small Tables and Big Felting Dreams

A skirt course with Sabine Reichert-Kassube

Many felt enthusiasts, being mostly women, dream to make a skirt from fine wool and fabric in the nuno felting technique. This is not easy to do because the room to lay out the materials is usually lacking. This problem was solved once and for all times by Sabine Reichert-Kassube by means of an intricate stencil technique making the felting of a skirt in cramped spaces possible. She passed on this method in her pre-course to the felt encounter in Bad Schandau.

☞ As we soon found out the space in the youth hostel was rather limited, but thanks to the mentioned technique it proved enough and all finished skirts fitted perfectly.

☞ Sabine Reichert-Kassube dedicated her attention to each feltmaker according to her individual experience and skill, gave support regarding wished-for personal projects and advised everybody in the choice of textiles to be felted in, from pongee silk to cotton fabric. Silk that had been beautifully dyed by her was also integrated in some specimen.

☞ In this way a whole collection of various skirt models, balloon skirts, ones with a bib or a fashionable cacheur. Some participants even managed to make a second one throughout the duration of the course.

☞ Everyone profited from Sabine Reichert-Kassube's experience and skills, from beginner to professional. She answered every single question. Her technique can be fully recommended for people who do not own a studio with a big felting table, since also on a small size table you could lay out a swinging skirt.

KATHRIN BAUERRICHTER

Folded Cap and Traveller

Hat course with Annemie Koenen

Headgear from a casual cap to an elegant Traveller hat: These were made in Annemie Koenen's course by the ten participants, using her hand-dyed Merino-silk mixture.

☞ At first, each of the feltmakers chose her favorite form from the models on show. They calculated the stencil measurements from those of the head circumference, the desired width of the brim and the shrinking factor. Then the stencil form was drawn onto impact sound insulation foil.

☞ The required workload differed according to the chosen project. Hats with wired-in stabilizers in the curved brim, but also caps with sculptural ornaments or seamlessly felted hat or brim ribbon required a lot of patience and stamina. Annemie Koenen explained and showed each working step with great care, amongst others the decorative prehistoric stitch which fixes the hat brim

on the lower side and she helped with the professional finishing of the hats over special hat forms.

☞ A real hit was the plaited HatCap with a rolled-up edge which felted really easily and fast: Some participants made several of those during the course for each season – one monochrome, some with a contrasting inside color that can be seen when the edge is rolled up or with felted cords as decoration. Others used their waiting time (when the needed hat form was occupied) to make such a HatCap.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 14-17

Huomisen Huopaa – Felt(ing) for Tomorrow

20-year anniversary exhibit of the Finnish Filtti Association

With a large art exhibition titled »Huomisen Huopaa« (Felt for Tomorrow) the Finnish Felt Association Filtti celebrated their 20 year anniversary. 39 felt and textile artists from Finland, but also from South Africa, England, Northern Ireland, Romania, Japan and Germany – Sigrid Bannier und Susanne Breuling – took part in this festive event in the Finnish Craft Museum in Jyväskylä.

☞ »What exactly means 'Felt for Tomorrow'?« asked the chairwoman Eija Pirttilahti in her introduction to the exhibition catalogue. The answers she gathered from the Finnish felters reach out far and wide. Here a choice of examples: »For one thing, it is to transfer the ancient handicraft to the future in the shape of new products, uses and material combinations. Felting is conducive to wellbeing and relaxation and can even serve as a therapeutic handicraft technique for stressful days. It enhances the status of this ecological, versatile and ethical material, i.e. wool. 'Felt for tomorrow' is meant as a way to promote Finnish feltmaking internationally and to discover new impressions through contacts via the social media and the internet. Felting is a way to create textile art. Also, for children it offers interesting experiences, after all they are the feltmakers of tomorrow. 'Huomisen Huopaa' takes on countless different meanings.

☞ These jointly gathered thoughts and impressions flowed somewhat into the felted artwork on show.« Filtti's 20th anniversary exhibition is a joint project of the members and executed in cooperation with the Craft Museum of Finland,« states Eija Pirttilahti. »Felt for Tomorrow' authenticates our share in transferring the felting tradition to the future.«

☞ We are pleased to introduce the works of three Finnish felt artists and their opinions concerning wool and felt below:

Eeva Piesala

Feltmaker, entrepreneur and sheep breeder
☞ Wool has travelled with me a long way ever since I was at my grandmother's place as a child – or rather carried me along, at least that is how I felt sometimes. I have run my company called Piiku, focusing on Finnsheep wool, since 1984. My son is now looking after the Finnsheep that I initially took over from my grandmother.

☞ All sorts of handicrafts have been my passion all my life but felting with the wool of my own sheep always came first. Felting fascinates me because of the limitless possibilities to shape it and to combine colors. I always felt using the fibers of my own sheep and in general I make colorful, large objects. Carpets and wall hangings are my specialty for which I use the services provided by local felt factories, such as needling and roller felting machines.

☞ It is crucial for me to use my own wool, because I know everything there is to know about it. I know how it has grown, who has sheared and washed it, with what and how it has been dyed and carded.

☞ Throughout the years, Finnsheep wool has been refined through our work. All necessary wool textiles can be made of it and it is suitable for thin knits and weavings as well as for felt boots. I want to continue this cultural heritage, draw from its roots and reach out to the winds coming from the treetops.

www.piiku.eu

Eija Pirttilahti

Feltmaker, felt expert and artisan

☞ I started to make felt over 30 years ago, always curiously experimenting and seeking what can be made of wool by felting. Wool has been my most loved material since childhood, and I can still discover new worlds in it. For me, felt making is the most suitable technique because I can create something beautiful with it.

☞ I started my company Sammallammas in 1994. In the beginning I felted

accessories like scarves, hats and vests, but quite soon I started to make interior decoration and gift items. My best-selling products are wine coolers with animal themes. Over the years I have felted thousands of foxes, elks, bears, reindeer and other forest animals which have travelled all over world.

☞ The Finnish nature and its effects inspire my working, especially as it surrounds my workshop in all its diversity. During an ordinary work day I might see a fox, an elk or a lynx, even a bear has visited the yard in front my workshop. Motifs like wind, rain, rock, ice, forest, animals, moss, trees and many other themes from nature have found expression in my works.

☞ In my felt works I use Finnsheep wool, which is a marvelous material even for large three-dimensional objects. Due to the fibers being of suitable length, you may gain a tight and hard felt if necessary, even though the wool fibers themselves are fine and soft. Finnsheep wool is always close at hand, in the neighborhood, so to speak, therefore its use is ethically and ecologically justifiable.

☞ Sculpting is the most attractive feature of felt. A textile sculpture can be felted with rather simple means. I love to elaborate my technique further and refine my ideas. So my work becomes beautiful, well-balanced and unique. My latest works have been felt sculptures. By patterning the surface, the shapes become vivid and decorative.
www.eijapirttilahti.fi

Tupu Mentu

Crafts Teacher and Artist

☞ I'm 57 years old and live and work in Helsinki. Much of my spare time I spend in southeastern Finland, where I have a small studio plus showroom in an old railway station. The exhibitions (fb. vuolionasema) are open for the public during the summer months.

☞ I like variation and change, so I combine different felting techniques with textile printing, embroidery and dyeing. I also like adding some humorous details here and there to my own work. Wool as a material attracts me because of its versatility and the characteristic nature of the fiber itself.

☞ As a teacher I focus on both design skills and artistic expression. Encouraging adults to find their own ways of expression is my most important aim. My own work as a textile artist provides the resources for such an arts and craft adult education.
tupu.mentu@elisinet.fi

PAGE 18-19

Felt from the Cradle to the Grave

Traditional textile art from Bashkortostan in the Max Berk Collection

Bashkortostan is a country which is not very well known here. Situated at the eastern border of the European part of the Russian Federation west of the Ural mountain range, it boasts an incredibly rich textile tradition. This was amply demonstrated in Heidelberg at the textile collection Max Berk in the spring of 2019. In co-operation with the gallery »Ural« from the National Center for Folk Art in Ufa and the Bashkirian doctor Dinara Daniel, the gallery presented traditional costumes, imaginative felted costumes, patchworks and felted carpets from various regions of Bashkortostan. All showed items had been awarded national and international awards.

Garments and Carpets

The material felt was crucial for the Bashkirs, who used to live as half-nomads, to make the yurts (Yaylyau) but also clothing and accessories as well as cozy, warming carpets. Felt literally accompanied this people from their birth until their death and was related to many legends, customs and rituals: So the bride made her first steps into her husband's house on white felt and also the wedding night was spent on a white felt cloth. From white felt was the baby's first diaper, but this color and material combined were also a general sign of respect. White yurts were meant for guests only. Felt served as a protection for the warrior and his horse and was the base material for clothing, shoes, cradles, furniture and houses, often decorated with ornaments that should keep bad luck away.

Project in Burangul

In May 2002 the project Filzkollektion Tamga (Felt Collection Tamga) was called into life by the Ural gallery, since nowadays the traditional felt art form – as part of the Bashkirian national art – was almost completely forgotten. The gallery invited young artists and teachers from different arts school for youths from different towns and regions of the republic to the village Burangul in order to felt together. Burangulovskie masters are among the best teachers for felt processing and experts for customs and

rites which accompanied felting in the olden days. Since then, the importance of felt in the Bashkirian culture has had a revival in many arts and crafts.

Sculptured Wall Hangings

At present, a white yurt is being made for the 'World Folkloriada' event which will take place in 2020 in Bashkortostan. For this yurt a group of artists at the Ural gallery have made a series of decorative felted carpets named »Kuray«, first on show in Heidelberg. The four sculpturally felted wall hangings witness the beauty of the Bashkirian landscape. Kuray refers to a national musical instrument of the same name, a flute made from the stem of the umbelliferous plant *Edgepisil*.

Costumes from an Epic

Another project, »Kostüme aus dem Epos Ural-Batyr (Costumes from the Epic Ural-Batyr)« began in 2013 and was finished a year later. In December 2014 it was awarded the first prize at the international festival »Ethno-Erato«. The imaginative costumes personify the protagonists of an old Bashkirian epic, e.g. the ruler of the sky and the birds, Samrau, his daughter Ajchyla or Ural-Batyr and his wife Gullistan, which means translated »Country of the Flowers«.

The Bashkirian Jack Frost

In 2015 a further prizeworthy project followed, called »Kyschlau«. This is the name of the winter home of the Bashkirian Jack Frost called Kyschbabaya. According to the legend he wanders through the whole Ural mountain range and covers the ground with snow so that it gets warm and cozy for all beings. Under the deep snow in the Ural real miracles and metamorphoses happen. The earth prepares for the return of spring, when his granddaughter Karchylyu (meaning Beauty of Winter) changes into Laysan (meaning First Spring Rain), graciously spilling rain onto the ground. Quite fitting for the subject matter the group of artists made light and warm winter clothing.

☞ Next to these spectacular felt costumes the exhibit in the textile collection Max Berk showed needle-felted carpets made by the artist Talgat Masalimov called »Melodies from Home«. They have traditional striped patterns and the blossom motifs which are also typical for traditional costumes.

☞ Next to the felted objects patchwork was another key aspect of the show. Also here felt is put to use. For instance, the artist Zulfia Brailo worked traditional

decorative ribbons, so-called Tartma, into her wall hanging »Remembering My Granny«. The Tartma were used to connect blankets, felted parts and carpets and were made in part of felt themselves.

DR. KRISTINE SCHERER

PAGE 20

Intensity and Presence

Needle-Felted Sculptures by Stefanie Ehrenfried in Weil der Stadt

Monumental heads in quiet, cool off-white or – with three different faces this time – needled from dark wool, a »big berry« composed of a dozen heads and a shape with snakelike arms rising up from a cloud-looking base, calling to mind the foam-born Aphrodite: Stefanie Ehrenfried's needle-felted sculptures from sheep wool fascinate the beholder, albeit at times they manage to irritate or even unsettle. During the opening in the Wendelinskapelle in Weil der Stadt the art historian Dr. Sabine Heilig put it thus: »It is certain that the intensity of Stephanie Ehrenfried's art eludes nobody.«
☞ In her honorific speech Dr. Heilig built a bridge to Joseph Beuys who introduced felt to art in the 1960ies. »The artistic material used by Stefanie Ehrenfried is somewhat alive, appealing and familiar in its use.«

Sculptures with a Life of Their Own

The big sculptures often present considerable technical challenges, especially where stability is concerned. »Der große Beweger« (The big mover) for example, a sculpture made in 2017 is about 2.20 m high. As Dr. Heilig describes: »It happens regularly that the artist has to intervene in something already finished in order to counteract the sculpture's independent existence. This »maturing process« corresponds to the principle of life that lies in the permanent change that constitutes human life.« Stefanie Ehrenfried says: »The audience either loves the extraordinariness of the work or they are somewhat fearful of their presence.«

HELENE WEINOLD

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Art and Innovation in a Dialogue

Art Exhibit in a Car Show Center / Presentation of an Electric Car

The shining surface of two of the latest electric car models by Audi and art objects of sculpted wool by Irene Reinhardt, forged steel by Gerd Krämer, paintings by Barbara Winkler as well as paintings and modifications by Klaus Biliczky have reached an exciting symbiosis on more than 400 square meters of the car exhibition center Gelder & Sorg in Coburg. ☞ »A lucrative dialogue happens where a reciprocal sense of inspiration is possible and where all parties involved are presented with different points of view,« said Irene Reinhardt in her opening speech. »As today art meets innovation we would like to start this dialogue.«

Seeming Opposites

The felt artist from Coburg Irene Reinhardt sculpts objects from felt invite touching due to their special haptics. Hard and soft, structured and smooth, monochrome and colorful are not the only oppositions that merge effortlessly here. Illusion is mirrored in a perfect material usage, real circular flows meet imagination, order corresponds with chaos.

☞ Irene Reinhardt's felted steles are a composition of reduced design elements and a perfect shading of the grey and other color ranges. Thickly felt-covered pedestals are crowned by bizarre dice which give away their specific, human characteristics as heads, like for example in »Der Aggressive (The Aggressive)« or »Der Zweifler (The Disbeliever)« »Der perfekte Kreislauf (The perfect circle)« is a threepart work which broaches the issue of the life cycle of salmon. Behind a most delicately felted, water-like surface salmon leather is integrated.

Litter Pollution of the Oceans

The two-part steles titled »bin gespannt, wer nach uns ausstirbt (I wonder who will become extinct after us)« shows a dialogue between maritime life forms that heatedly discuss that the litter pollution of the oceans leads to the extinction of species. The penetration of the fish's extremities by box-like tops points to the immediate consequences of plastic accumulation in the sea. The immaterial impression of felt

shows in the threepart projection surface (Projektion der Vergänglichkeit (Projection of Fucacity) of the elliptic net nests-like objects and refers to the different aspects of transparency. In the acoustics felt can serve as an effective sound insulation material.

☞ »For us all art is not only a medium of mere representation. It has been always a part of society and still has the potential to give new impulses. This invites comparison with electric mobility research that has been giving innovative impulses for the future evolution of our societies in the last couple of years«, Irene Reinhardt describes the idea to turn the auto exhibit center into a temporary art gallery at the occasion of the introduction of the new »Audi e-tron«.

PAGE 22-23

The Language of Archaic Forms

Mechtildis Köder in the Tuchmacher Museum (Clothmaking Museum) Bramsche

Mechtildis Köder connects motifs like runic writing, spirals and the ancient felting craft in her objects, which were on show for six weeks in the Tuchmacher Museum Bramsche themed »Filz und Eigensinn – und ich«. Already at the opening her art attracted a lot of attention.

☞ The exhibits integrate themselves pleasantly to the museum premises of this historical building. Under its very roof, the clothmakers' guild manufactured wool fabrics until the 1970ies. One can sense a certain silent communication between the art objects and the historic walls of the museum. It is almost as if they had always hung there and told their story.

☞ The artist herself offers a glimpse into her work and its content in her opening speech, also explaining the show's bold title. »Sheep wool, the basic material for felts, is a natural material. Each breed provides a different kind, each type feels and works differently, has its own will and sometimes even stubbornness. And if I mix different kinds, which I usually do, the whole business becomes even more stubborn as I go along.«

No Return

The dialogue with wool and the resulting felt is an exciting process. »Who is more

stubborn? The wool, the technique, or I? The nativeness and clarity of the technique make for an almost magical space saturated with slow motion, patience, flow, but at the same time felt creates precedents: There is simply no way back.«

☞ The archaic material felt is an ideal medium for an equally archaic language of forms, to which she wishes to add new meanings, Köder states. »I believe that these two always belong together.«

☞ So, the artist shows on a whole series shield-shaped objects runic language from the so-called Elder Futhark, a row of 24 characters that were used in Northern Europe until the Middle Ages. »They are symbols of the world view of Germanic tribes and were probably used for shamanic or initiation purposes«, Köder believes. »The more Christianity and writing spread the more the runic characters and their use were pushed into the background or were reduced to simple letters.«

Spiral as a Symbol

In many of her objects the artists includes spirals: »If I get into this special way of making lines I can feel a great force and depth and I can sense and respect the message: In and out, narrow and wide, middle and outside as images representing the phases of life, personal ways to live or just the fashioning of a single day.«

☞ At the opening Mechtildis Köder rendered the spiral form in both a physical and sensual way. Accompanied by the music of a harp and singing the guests formed a circle, hand-in-hand, out of which spiraled a row of people. A special mood prevailed, composed of nativity, communal thinking and the knowledge of becoming, ending and change.

Commitment for Children

At the end the artist asked for donations. Titled »Starry Sky«, quaint, small garments on sale made of raw wool were shown in a glass case. The price for each was very low, and the gains went to the Deutsche Kinderschutzbund, a national association for the protection of children. Mechtildis Köder told the audience touchingly and impressively what these garments stand for: the history of a girl that is forced into prostitution but retains her marvelous voice which brings to mind bright stars. An exhibition of deeper meaning!

MONIKA LAMMERS

PAGE 26-29

Never-Fading Blossoms

An extra close look at Kristy Kun's felted flowers and sculptures pays off.

Lavish blossoms with innumerable petals, often in off-white with a breath of pastel hues like rose, yellow, blue and green are Kristy Kun's trademark. They are intricately built yet of a captivating quaintness, seeming natural and artificial at the same time. It is worthwhile to study them at close range. Only then you see the fine dark lines at the edge of the petals – an attractive, elegant detail by which the artist sets great store.

☞ »People often ask me whether the blossoms are replica of real plants. The answer is no. They stem from my own imagination. I do study how petals are shaped and how they form a blossom, mostly with chrysanthemum specimens, but whatever comes to life in my studio is a playful combination of all colors and shapes.«

One-of-a-Kind Felting Technique

Kristy Kun has developed a special combination of needle and wet-felting that she employs for her blossoms but also for her abstract sculptural objects. Architecture and natural forms inspire her. As basic material she uses a special needle-felt which she makes herself with a machine sporting 720 felting needles, the FeltLOOM. »I use standard, clean and carded wool or ready-made needle-felt and make an entirely new fabric out of it. This comes in several layers in different colors with silk fabric and often with natural fiber components. This 'Sandwich' is needled into a new pre-felt which is a complex composition of color and structure«, states the artist.

☞ For the blossoms she winds up long strips of said pre-felt together with Merino roving into a roll which are fixed with stitches by the felting needle. Then the roll is wet-felting. (How the roll is prepared to turn into blossoms Kristy Kun describes in her step-by-step instruction on pages 30/31.)

☞ The aim is a very dense felt with a smooth surface, which is why she has to burn or shave the protruding fibers off a bit.

Silk at the Edges

»The last step, cutting the edges of the embossed surfaces (relief structures or petals) brings a fine, clear line and the

delicate details of the embedded silk to the fore again, « the artist says happily. »This is worth all the energy I put into making the multi-layered pre-felt.« Often she spends many hours, even days to bring these little gems to light and to neaten all loose fibers which turn up in the process. »I think the great care I take with finishing goes back to the years where I worked polish into wooden furniture by hand.« After all, it is only ten years ago that she changed her preferences from wood to wool.

☞ »My life as a craftswoman began in a wood-processing workshop where I built fine furniture from recycled and historic wood«, she tells us. »The choosing and processing of the wood, making the connections, construction and the finishing have fulfilled me for many years.«

☞ The skills she learned during that period resurface in her present objects, albeit less obviously. It can be seen, for example, in hand-made frames and upholstery methods when felt is mounted – and at long last also in her very own felting technique. »My unique way to connect wool fibers dryly before the wet-felting has its origin in the wooden connections of the furniture I used to make.«

Fiber Commerce

Kristy Kun became a professional felt-maker only about four years ago, but long before she already had a soft spot for fine fibers. Her company Opulent Fibers imported wool and other materials and sold it to artists in the US. She invited dozens of American and international lecturers to host workshops in her studio.

☞ During a fiber festival in her neighborhood she finally caught the felting virus: »To touch the wool and feel that magic moment when the fibers connect to metamorphose into a new material really enthralled me«, she remembers, and she is still enthralled by it. »Apart from that the plastic possibilities and the innumerable combinations which can be achieved by felting in and around other materials than wool inspire my creativity boundlessly.«

☞ Today the 44-year-old artist has her workshop in a two-storied building on the main street of a small town near Portland in Oregon, where she works mostly alone or in the company of her dog, Tucker. The first floor is reserved for the dry laying out of the wool, wet-felting takes place on the ground one, where a concrete floor makes cleaning-up easier.

☞ In two minutes she can walk from her studio to her house – »enough of a distance

to keep me away from the household chores, so I can concentrate on my work but still close enough to go home for dinner (or a nap) and remain a part of the family.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 30-31

Opulent Flower Roll

Technique by Kristy Kún

Overview

This technique of using a simple strip of merino fiber as a »glue« for prefelt constructions allows for the most versatile use of prefelts for ceating sculptural and richly textured felt. The tutorial demonstrates using my signature laminated prefelt, but any commercial or hand-made prefelt works for this technique.

Tutorial

Tireless attention to details gives the best results, however, it also causes tutorials to go a little long. This tutorial segment shows the process for dry layout of a flower in detail. Moving on to wet felting requires slow and gentle working of the needled area before felting the body of the flower and trimming petals. I trust you will have fun experimenting with this! If you would like to join me in the online classroom for the full tutorial with videos, registration is available on my website.

~ This technique is offered as an online workshop with video demonstrations of the process all the way through wet felting. FilzFun subscribers can save 50% with coupon code »FlowerFun«.

Materials

- ~ 36« strip of prefelt, 2« wide
- ~ 38« strip of merino wool pencil roving
- ~ tuft of merino top (to be used for all three lessons)
- ~ 3-needle felting tool, felting foam, scissors

1. Prepare the work station with prefelt and thin length of wool top (pencil roving).

2. Place the strip of prefelt on the merino top, covering about 2/3 of the width of the wool fiber. Leave a little tail of merino at the end.

NOTE: *if you are left handed, the merino will go on the left!!*

I am right handed and will needle with my rt. and roll with left hand.

3. Fold the tail of merino up onto the prefelt and begin to roll them together. Roll so it is tight, not sloppy, but not too tight.

You are going to roll a cylinder of these materials and needle them together as you roll along.

4. Through the entire rolling and needling process, you will want a little merino between the layers, and a little to remain to the bottom of the cylinder and be needled around with the fibers from previous wraps.

5. The needling sequence is 3-4 jabs at the lower side of the coil and 3-4 jabs at the top side of the coil, then roll up a little more. This photo shows needling into the top of the coil.

6. TIP: Keep an eye on shifting as you roll and needle the coil. You do not want a cone to form on either end of the coil. If you see this starting, as in the photo, push the strips back in line.

7. Tip: The merino fiber should be creating a soft fill of wool between the layers and around the bottom of the coil. If you see a sharp edge of the cut prefelt, stop and pull to loosen the merino and spread it to cover the exposed edge. Needle into place.

8. When you reach the end of the prefelt, trim the edge square (if needed) and break the remaining merino with about a two-inch tail. The wisp of merino tail will fall over the cut end of the prefelt and gets needled down onto the roll.

9. Place three soft wisps of wool over the bottom of the coil. Draft them light and even and place in alternating directions.

10. Needle the additional merino into the bottom of the coil. Short needling strokes that just enter the prefelt are all that's necessary. It needs a lot of needling but should still finish soft rather than needled to a hard surface.

11. Wispy fibers like these need to be needled into the coil or down the side. Double check the entire piece and

push them in where needed.

12. Voila!! Well done. The coil is now prepared for wet felting!

Wet Felting

While I cannot provide so many pages of tutorial to move on to wet felting with you, I trust that a felter with some experience will be able to work with the construction we have just made... Provided with these tips:

1. Wet the bottom of the flower by dipping it in warm, slightly soapy felting water. Just allow the bottom 1/2« of the coil to become wet for the first bit felting.

2. The initial gesture for felting the bottom of the coil is to put gentle pumps of pressure into the bottom of the coil with your hand. Work slowly until you feel the fibers are beginning to tighten into the prefelt.

3. When you feel the bottom has become a bit firmer, submerge the entire coil into the water and start the felting process (still squeezing) through the entire piece. Be sure to check now and then to ensure the layers of prefelt are not felting together where they will be cut.

4. Have fun!!

PAGE 32-35

Felted Ladies of a Certain Format

With her Fat Ladies Tanja Kahl Takes up the Cudgels for Self-Acceptance

Redhead Jule takes a sunbath in the meadows in her blue bikini, flipflops on her feet. Gudrun got comfy on a stone, wearing a rust-colored one-piece bathing suit and a sun hat, and Paula shows her back under dashingly crossed swimsuit straps. None of the three would succeed in a casting show for fashion models because they aren't skinny at all. Quite on the contrary: Their curves are voluptuous curves.

~ Tanja Kahl, who makes the gracious, plump creatures from felt puts it in a nutshell: »Colorful, sensuous, voluminous female bodies – my Fat Ladies!«

Creative From Early On

Her creativity has been given to her already in the cradle the 46 year old artist from the Odenwald believes: Her mother and one of her grandmothers sewed, knitted and crocheted and taught it to the child Tanja. She found felting through her volunteer work as a parent's council member in a kindergarten and soon loved it. After some courses she took in an adult education center and many experiments of her own she registered for a course with Inge Bauer at the Oberrot Felting School. »It was an unbelievable occasion!« she reminisces.

~ After some deliberation she decided on participating in the three year-long education program »Fit in Felt« at the Oberrot school in order to become a felt designer. She has never regretted this step. »As of May 2015, my path coincided with those of really great people which turned into true friends. These three years absolutely enriched my life!«

Motto for the Graduation Work

The first fat lady was made in March 2017 and marked the beginning of a long series. Soon it became evident that the Rubens' figures would become the subject of Tanja Kahl's graduation piece called »My way in felt«.

~ There are parallels to her own personal history. »Also, In my life being plump played a sometime role. But I found a way to deal with it. Nobody is perfect, so the correct statement of Osgood Feeling III. The arms are too short, the legs too fat – it does not seem to fit. But it surely does, such is nature!«

~ The spectators react differently to Kahl's Fat Ladies, but »often they cause a chuckle in people you could rightly call sticks in the mud – this makes the figures so very special.«

Size and Femininity

Often the felt artists is asked why her Fat Ladies have no faces. Tanja Kahl doesn't want to limit herself to a facial expression. »For me, they don't require a face because they score through their size and their femininity. I know of no better feeling than felting a big bosom, a fat belly or wide hips with a lot of behind.« There is no wire or anything like it in the ladies, they are structurally and compactly built. Again and again the artists puts on small

wooden flakes on certain spots in order to achieve the desired thickness.

~ She mostly uses mountain sheep wool but likes to try wool from other breeds.

»I found a Merino mix which is especially suitable for very small fat ladies.«

~ When the lady has reached the wished-for size she is complemented with a bathing suit or a bikini, sometimes with a dress. But any wool shrinks with strong finishing, so the artist again puts on a load of material in order to ensure the plumpness of the figurine.

~ A special highlight comes with fashioning their hairdos. She dyes the wool curls for the hair herself with acid colors while trying to find natural hues. When they are ready the hair are fixed with a felting needle on the head.

Exhibitions and Courses

»The Fat Ladies became my hallmark«, Tanja Kahl says, »but I also like to make quite different figures such as animals, or accessories like hats, shoes, caps, scarves, cuffs and flowers.« For a long time now, felt has ceased to be a mere pastime: Tanja Kahl offers courses (see info box), represents her work on fairs and markets and shows her figurines in exhibits. She participated in Marienmünster at the members' show of the German Filz-Netzwerk with her »Großen weißen Dicken Dame (Great big white lady)« who has a bright red heart.

~ »My husband fully supports my ideas«, Tanja Kahl says joyfully. »When my son was in his puberty Mom's felted objects embarrassed him a little, since none of his peers would have allowed for fat ladies lolling about the flat. For my daughter, though, my felt art is something special and she shows a great interest in it.«

~ Some of Tanja Kahl's Fat Ladies seem to float in the air despite their buxom bodies. They hang suspended from the ceiling on transparent threads or rise over a flower bed – an aesthetically rewarding sight.

~ »My Fat Ladies carry a message,« Tanja Kahl resumes: »Nobody should be judged by the way they look. Love yourself for yourself!«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 36-37

Mystical Play of Colors

Christa Fischer paints with wool and the felting needle.

At the last evening of the feltmakers' meeting in Bad Schandau the participants marvelled at beautiful objects at an exhibition of Saxonian felters in the Nationalparkhaus in Bad Schandau. The felted »paintings« made by Christa Fischer from Freiberg attracted a lot of attention, some participants even spontaneously decided to visit this mountain town because of her renderings.

~ Christa Fischer has been very well known there for many years. She could not know from her first single exhibit in the rehab hospital at the Tharandt Forest in Hetszdorf in 2008 what great interest her works would find in the coming years. Up til now she has presented her felted images in more than 25 exhibits, amongst other places in the Stadt- und Bergbaumuseum Freiberg (Town and Mining Museum), in the Freiberg Nikolaikirche (Nikolai-Church), the Hainichener Tuchmacherhaus (Cloth Manufacturer House) and in the Heimathaus (Home House) in Claußnitz. The enthusiastic spectators finally persuaded her to sell her work on a professional basis. For her, though, the joy of the new owners, who often have a kind of personal relationship with the depicted sights or motifs, is always dearer than the financial gain.

Precision Work

Christa Fischer was born in 1932. She worked as a professional tailor and later as a design draftsman for geology and mining, natural and technical areas she always felt close to. Precision is important to her, but also her knack for colors and her astounding drawing talent enhance her art projects.

~ She needle-felts her 'paintings' on especially fine styrofoam plates which she envelops with fabrics made from natural sources. Many different layers of colors are put on top of each other, the shades tested and sometimes dismissed altogether and newly arranged. This process takes time, also because Christa Fischer likes to visit her surrounding motifs and natural sights in real life, often in different weather and varying light conditions.

Atmospheric Light

Many of her objects deal with a mystical play of colors and natural motifs.

Often she has caught the landscapes in an especially atmospheric light, e.g. renderings from the Ore Mountains or the Baltic Sea island Rügen, but also Mongolian landscapes, where she worked for five months in 1990.

☞ Sometimes the inspiration comes simply from the play of the colors in the wool fleeces. She made several paintings in which the colors seem to explode out of a powerful middle, aptly titled »Urknall« (Big Bang)

The Spiral of Life

In a colorful »Lebensspirale« (Spiral of Life), whose arms are sometimes merrily colorful but then again matte and subdued Christa Fischer has worked in memories of her own life. Amongst other things she suffered early the loss of beloved persons and some health setbacks. After she recovered, she turned intensely to processing sheep wool, she felts, dyes, spins, weaves and knits.

☞ At the end of my visit I was able to persuade her to show herself in one of her extraordinarily intricate works. With a chuckle she fetched a bobbin lace vest that she made herself. In the age of 87 here she stands poised like any model in front of the camera, so chic and dapper!

INA JEROMIN

PAGE 38-41

Gotland Sheep

When people talk about the Gotland sheep it always ends in a discussion which sheep exactly is a Gotland and which is not. It is rather simple, really. There are two entirely different, self-contained sheep races which both developed from wild, freely grazing Gotland sheep. On one side today we speak of the Horned Gotland Sheep, also known as Guteschaf (GoodSheep) and the Gotland Pelt Sheep with its characteristic curls on the other.

☞ It is often assumed that the Guteschaf is the older race because it looks a lot more like the wild sheep than the Pelt Sheep. In fact both races were first bred more or less at the same time. Which breed has older title to the name Gotland Sheep cannot be determined. But both races do rightly exist so we will present them here with equal rights.

☞ The history of both breeds began in

the 1920ies, when the breeding of the Pelt Sheep started by a selective choice of certain characteristics. Simultaneously, the free grazing, horned wild sheep became the Guteschaf over time.

The Guteschaf Description

Both sexes have lightly turned, converging or diverging horns with strong furrows; the yearly growth is easily visible. The middle-sized body is rather delicate even when heavy wool suggests otherwise, it shows in the slender legs and the long, relatively narrow head with its broader forehead and marked eye socket bow. Legs and head and the tip of the tail carry no wool. (Edberg 1996). The ears are relatively small, especially with the rams.

Wool

The fur consists of underwool, top hair layer and the kemp hair which contain marrow. It is a typical mixed wool fleece that shields the animals well against cold, wind or moisture. The rams have a characteristic mane of darker, often black, wiry hair. With the ewes this part of the body only carries more wool.

☞ The colors irritate breeders of strongly selected races. The lambs are born either black, some with white fur markings, white and brown-checked ones, tinged with grey or looking like Mufflon lambs with brown shades. The color of the adult sheep varies over the whole range of grey and often you see a brownish tint. All white or all black animals are rare. Usually the outer wool is lighter than the body parts that grow no wool. Usually there are light hairy areas around the mouth and eyes with the darker sheep. From the lamb's hair to the pelt of the adult animal the color of the hair, also the facial markings, may vary greatly.

The Gotland Pelt Sheep Description

The Gotland Pelt Sheep is a short-tailed sheep from the Nordic Schnucke species. It is of middle height, an unpretentious land sheep which can be kept in big flocks or small groups. Both sexes are hornless and they have narrow heads with long, slightly »Roman« noses. The head carries black kemp, but no wool, which is also the case with the legs. The claws are pigmented.

☞ The fleece grows slowly and is very curly. It is always described as »of mixed wool« but according to the breeder Peter Bongards this is not true. Other than with other heath sheep breeds

with a windproof, rain-deviating fleece consisting of kemp, long and wooly hair plus underwool, the Gotland Pelt has three-dimensional locks (so-called Schiller curls). Like Wensleydale Sheep, also the Gotland Pelt soaks through to the skin when it rains, when the wind blows the curls up you can see the skin underneath.

☞ The wool fibers vary with each single animal from very fine to coarse. The rams have a slight mane or forelock. The Gotland Pelt is usually shorn twice a year. In March you get a fleece that is slightly connected, in the fall the curls fall singly. ☞ The lambs are born with a black fleece which turns to a silvery grey until they are 2 months old. Only a few keep their black color.

Wool

As you can tell from these brief descriptions, one hundred years of breeding resulted in two entirely different races. This becomes even clearer when you look at the wool and their respective characteristics.

☞ Already at first glance the marked difference in the wool becomes clear. While the Pelt Sheep wool presents itself with the characteristic curls and the typical stacks, the wool of the Guteschaf shows a lot of underwool, few top hair and short, easily visible kemp hair - all typical features of wild sheep. The kemp presents difficulties for felting purposes, to put it mildly.

☞ For the felting tests 3 g and 10 g from each type were laid out on a surface of 20 cm x 20 cm.

Felting Trials Pelt Sheep

Strongly curled wool always has the disadvantage that it forms thick stacks which we see as curly strands. When the raw wool is laid out to cover surfaces evenly, these stacks have to be plucked apart which is very time-consuming. In the thicker variant I carded the test piece in order to loosen the single stacks.

☞ Now the Pelt Sheep wool is famous for its great felting qualities, so I have not to go into the fact that it felts easily and simply. What is remarkable (especially after our trial series) is the extraordinary amount of shrinkage of this wool. No wool hitherto tested in this serial has ever shrunk so much. The felt is rather smooth and little hairy.

Felting Trial Guteschaf

The wool of the Guteschaf behaves very differently. The wool can be laid out with remarkably less effort since there are

hardly any stacks worth mentioning. Only the top hair tend to fall together a little bit but they separate easily. As soon as the wool is moistened the kemp becomes more visible – and the trouble begins. It may be noted briefly that the kempy wool and other protruding hair (can be separated from the normal wool. This being rather difficult it was not undertaken in the trial period.

☞ The felting qualities are astoundingly positive. The wool lends itself easily to felting and shrinks quite a lot. As was to be expected, the kemp stuck out of the felt. When fulling, they tend to stick to the working surface and the hands which makes the work unpleasant. Also with the finished felt the kempy hair sticks out which makes for a hairy impression. When the felt is used it has to be taken into account that it will continue to lose the kemp.

Conclusion

If the Guteschaf weren't such beautiful animals the sheer amount of kempy wool would keep me from their wool altogether. But I have really fallen in love with them and will process Guteschaf wool in spite of this obstacle.

☞ The Gotland Pelt Sheep wool is a dream. But the price for the raw wool is developing into a real nightmare. You won't find it on my working table often.

MARGIT RÖHM

PAGE 42-43

The Great Anti-Moth Campaign

Corinna Nitschmann Advises on How to Win a Victory Against Meddlesome Moths and Their Larvae

The following is not meant for true Buddhists and animal protection activists: Here are some methods to root out all life stages of moths, because we are not keen on nibbled-on wool and felt objects with holes in it. So there!

☞ But whoever keeps wool in stock at home should be aware of the risk that moths feeding on wool or fur beetles invite themselves. This is the nature of this craft, as wood beetles belong into the carpenter's shop. They cannot be excluded a 100 %.

☞ Moths dancing around the lamp each night and some nibbled-on felts were reason enough to delve deeply into the phenomenon.

Round Zero: The Awakening

I first put up pheromone traps from the drugstore in order to determine who and where my enemies lurked. Crucial spots, so my inkling, were the corners, but also emptier areas of a certain room. As expected, the traps served well at the appointed spots, but in other corners the outcome was quite scarce. Wool itself and clothing made of wool are threatened by three kinds of parasites: Clothes Moth (*Tineola bisselliella*), Wallpaper Moth (*Trichophaga tapetzella*) and Fur Moth (*Tinea pellionella*), the latter turned up in my case the most, i.e. at 90 % . The following instructions can be employed with all kinds of moths and the fur beetle (*Attagenus pello*).

First Round: Get the Moths Out of the Room

- 1 Clear the room completely, and I mean completely. Almost everything! Only the big furniture can stay put.
- 2 Vacuum and wipe everything out with a moist rag, even wardrobes and drawer. Also vacuum the walls when there is wood-paneling. Turn smaller furniture and chests around and clean the back and downside. I found hanging so-called quivers at the back of the wool chest and on the wall behind furniture.
- 3 Spray an insect poison with a long-term effect, as much as you deem necessary. In my case there was an old chest which has to be lined anew on the inside, but until then the small animals can hide and develop under the torn lining. These poisons are contact poisons with Pyrethroids. In order to maintain order afterwards, also Neem oil, lavender, Cyprus wood and other, environmentally-friendly measures may prove enough.

Why all this is necessary? Because the just-hatched moths like to hide themselves and most of all because the larvae wander around to crawl out of the wool before they get into the chrysalis stage to find a silent place to metamorphose. For that they don't need wool anymore, they do it in books, furniture or floor nooks, often only a couple of yards away from any woolen specimens.

☞ If your moth traps are filled well substitute them and put them into the

clean, empty room. Count your catch every day in order to get an overview concerning the developments in the emptied room.

Round 2 – Examination and Inspection

Examine all vessels and the wool! That means: sit yourself down, put each roving, each fleece, also needle-fleeces in front of you, roll them up and watch them closely from beginning to end and on both sides. If you use plastic boxes or glassware for storage you can see the parasites from the outside already. What you should look for and eventually will find:

- Parts that have been fed on
- Moths' feces that look like sand: small round crumbs, often in the color of the respective wool
- dead moths that have hatched but couldn't find their way out
- Moths' quiver or webs that look like tiny tubes. Sometimes they take on the color of the wool but mostly they are white.

Emergency! If you find a quiver tear it up or mash it in the middle between your fingernails. If a pudding-like substance spills out (yes, yuck) it is 1:0 for you. If it's empty, the moth has long left and probably procreated merrily. Wool with the above signs should land on the »contaminated« heap. Treat it further or throw it into the garbage or cover it with earth in your raised veggie bed. The pure wool hopefully contains no eggs. That goes onto the »Clean« heap and is treated eventually, just for precaution, as the wool already contaminated. Examine every finished felt from the inside and the outside and also all pre-felts for signs of moth feeding or holes.

Round 3: Moth Extermination

Eggs, larvae and moths are susceptible to mechanical stress, light, heat (more) and frost (less). The moth's life cycle can be interrupted and sometimes even ended through high differences in temperature.

- 1 Hang or lie wool, needle fleeces and similar materials onto the clothes line or over the fence for two days in the blazing sun. Turn them over and bring them in overnight so they don't catch moisture.
- 2 Heat treatment variations: So you can partially dry up eggs, larvae and moths that are still alive:
 - Put the wool outside in preserving jars or plastic boxes during one or two hot summer days with a

temperature of more than 30°. The temperature inside the jars or boxes will reach over 50°, which should suffice. If the summer weather is just pleasantly warm or the sky overcast only 40° are reached – this is not enough

- Bake and dry the wool. Put it in the oven in three levels at 60 to 70 ° (circulating air) or for 1 ½ to 2 hours in a dessicator device.
 - I did not try that out, but a real sauna, properly heated should also solve the problem. Before storage make sure that the wool has properly dried.
 - You can also »cook«, not only »bake« felt. Put a piece or more in a sink and fill it with boiling water. Press the air out with a potato masher and drench the felt thoroughly in hot water. When the water has cooled down add a shot of vinegar and take the felts out. Roll or crumple them briefly then press the water out, form them and let them dry.
- 3 Put the wool into the freezer for two to three days.
 - 4 The wool which is infested should alternately be deep frozen and exposed to heat. This takes a couple of days but pays off. Back in a room you can hardly look in every rill, but try to make sure that the wool, brought back and well-sealed, is finally clean.
 - 5 You can also stamp on the fleeces laid out flat and crumple smaller amounts of wool between your palms in order to break everything that might be still alive in there.
 - 6 Check the wool every other week during a month and repeat the method, if required.

An ecological solution to the moth problem are ichneumon flies that can be ordered via the Internet. I have not tried that yet. The small eggs (0,3 mm) are delivered on little cards and put into the infested areas. The hatching, undetectable insects don't fly but crawl around in search of the moths' eggs and lay their own eggs there. Instead of a moth, later on a miniature ichneumon fly hatches.

Round 4: Maintenance

You can put everything back, hooray!

☞ Store the treated wool in lockable jars or plastic boxes and lay them out with something that eventually kills the moths or keeps them away. This can be moth paper from the drugstore, powder or cotton-wool balls basted with essential oils.

☞ Let your calendar or mobile phone remind you to change the moth protection or pheromone traps every three months.

☞ Don't hoard more wool than you can use up in the course of 6 months.

☞ Move your felted things, beat them and put them in the sun – again and again and every month.

☞ Spray felt that is standing around freely with Neemoil every six months. This makes the wool inedible for the parasites. I have not tried it out yet.

Clean, dust and keep everything in order.

☞ As I said before: Try to minimize the damage to the smallest possible extent and don't try to be the master of the universe. You would not be surprised if you had a pack of dogs outside waiting if your garden furniture were made of marrowbone.

CORINNA NITSCHMANN
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A Truly Special Wedding Dress

Sabine Reichert-Kassube has made the bride's attire for a shamanistic wedding ceremony

I am about to pack my suitcase for a trip to Morocco when my friend Henrike calls and tells me about her wish to marry in a wedding dress made from felt and silk.

☞ Three hours later she is standing in front of me after an almost three hour ride from Halle to Berlin. Her imposing presence fills the room. Henrike's cordial, friendly ways reconcile me with the considerable challenge and amount of work waiting for me. I have felted several wedding dresses already, and each time this represented a very intense process.

I am not surprised that Henrike plans a shamanistic wedding, but this one is certainly more than special: Henrike is going to get married to herself. No questions on my part, I have the feeling that all answers will be given during the creative process.

A House made from Felt and Silk

A childrens' dress in size 128 is the inspiration for Henrike's wedding dress.

A breath of felt and silk it should become, but how am I going to transform this into size 50?

☞ After two hours of planning and drinking coffee and due to Henrike's precise ideas we end up with a design, the measurements and the choice of silk and wool.

☞ Some weeks later the dress is materializing in my head. My friend and I keep in touch, I sketch several other designs and then the actual process gets going at last.

☞ I put my studio in order, so I am not distracted, close the door, burn some sage, clean up, sort myself out. Loreena McKennit's music gets me into a loving mood.

☞ Calculating the stencil is simple, since I proceed on the assumption of a shrinking factor 2 with such a lightweight felt as planned. With the exception of the arms the stencil fits my 230 cm x125 cm working table exactly. I cut the lengths of fabric from 15 m white crinkled chiffon and 3 m chiffon for the back part, front part and arms.

Tendrils and Leaves

The offwhite color is to be dyed lightly with Henna. Henrike's wish was for blossomed tendrils and leaves in delicate shades of green. These I prepare as pre-felts for two days, as well as many long lengths from crinkle chiffon and fine Merino.

☞ On the third day I start with the work on the stencil for the back part. The crinkle chiffon is arranged in a figure-friendly lengthwise direction in several lengths. In the skirt part I insert a lining made from smooth chiffon and the pre-felted lengths of material. So that the silk lengths in the skirt part fall apart from each other in the end I put foils in between. Only very little wool is needed for the skirt part so that the material can fall loosely.

☞ The Merino wool forms a fine web made from feathery strands. The white and green silk fibers on the wool strands will later crinkle which makes for beautiful shining effects. So that the middle of the back keeps stable despite its delicacy I work a tendril with leaves into it for stability. In a symbolic way this stands for a connection to the earth. A peplum should enhance and strengthen the female middle. As the elder blossoms outside I »paint« some of those blossoms in wool, meaning to give Henrike lightheartedness and a zest for life. I am happy and grateful that I am able to do such special work.

☞ After felting the back part on – it is already late in the evening – I roll a small part of the seam upward in order to stabilize the delicate connection of wool and silk.

☞ Turning the work piece around is simple with the help of the four-fold technique. I turn the handy little parcel swiftly and pull the folds out afterwards one by one.

☞ On the fourth day, again a hot summer day, I felt the front part. The working steps repeat themselves, but the neckline is deeper and the seam a bit shorter than with the back part. The arms run in several lengths with a slight tip and the end of each. Here and there blossoms and leaves are distributed.

A Spiral as a Symbol for Power

During the work I feel deeply connected with Henrike, I pluck and rub symbols of power and I paint and caress my wishes into the silk. One spiral begins at the left shoulder and a guardian angel floats on the left upper arm.

☞ I am in full flow during all this, I forget to eat and drink at times. It is a beautiful thought: To say yes to yourself, to celebrate and share the testimonial of an absolute acceptance of yourself... Henrike is in the middle of life. Like many women she has experienced blows in this time of transition. But she has grown through them and now she has reached a phase where only deep gratitude and love fill her heart.

☞ On the fifth day my meditative and sensual mood changes into a physical, powerful dimension. The dress is put together seamlessly and now I full it. I love to work hard, to reach my limit also with bodily work. I feel a deep connection with the felt masters in Kyrgyzstan and forget the surrounding heat. I am pressed for time, since today is Wednesday and Henrike wants to try on her dress in the early afternoon. The dress gains form and I free it from the many foils, I full here and form there – my feelings are good.

☞ After approx. 3 hours of hard physical fulling labor I rinse the dress. In the last vinegary rinsing, I put a few droplets of lavender oil which brings a fresh and flowery scent. The dress is ironed, formed again, last finishing touches and measurements.

☞ The big moment has arrived: I help Henrike into the dress which is still moist from spin-drying. Our mutual friend Ute says: »It fits and looks really well!« We are all relieved and happy.

☞ Over the next days I keep working on the headdress and two cuffs for the arms of different length.

A Festive Ceremony

Henrike's wedding is an unforgettable experience. The Tipi village near Fulda lies, quite romantically, along a little brook. When we arrive the women are busy making headdresses or ornaments from flowers while the men gather wood.

☞ The frame is a festive ceremony, led by two very charismatic female shamans. A powerful dance, accompanied by drums, singing and many symbolic gifts are part of the celebration. Henrike gives herself very touching wedding vows.

☞ She obviously feels well in her wedding dress and the guests pay her many compliments, which makes me happy as well.

☞ In the evening we sit around the fire for a long time and celebrate. The next morning we plant a Gingko tree for Henrike in this powerful spot before we travel home again, spiritually nurtured by the events of the past days.

SABINE REICHERT-KASSUBE

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Be a Feltmaker's Guest

Initiative by Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann for overnight travel accomodation

The felting teacher and author Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann from Düsseldorf does not only like to felt, she also loves to travel »in order to experience other cultures as closely as possible, to see how other people (have to) live and to make new friends all over the world.«

☞ But this, as she has seen, is not always easy. »I have outgrown backpacking and my partner doesn't like hostels.« Even when she had organized a trip herself it happened that she did not really get to know any local people.

Hardly women over 40

In a newspaper she read about Couchsurfing (the first agency for private accommodation) in Iran. She turned to the Internet on the lookout for similar offers for hosts and travelers and found quite many, mostly focusing on the search for a cheap bed. Men under 40 prevailed in both groups. »To travel and stay with a man you don't know at all or let one into my house is unthinkable. I have had too many not-so-nice experiences.« Women over 40 were hardly registered in the portals. »Then I realized that most

feltmakers I know fall into that age category.«

☞ Already with earlier trips Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann had tried to establish contact with local feltmakers »but that never exceeded a bit of Facebook chat.« How would it be if the search for reasonably priced accommodations could go hand in hand with getting to know other felters?

Group »Felt«

In a test of the newspaper CHIP the portal bewelcome.org scored because the original thought of getting to know each other is prevailing still. There Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann registered her group »Felt« and hopes that as many feltmakers as possible register there and a lively exchange will ensue. Felting as a common interest does not necessarily have to be in focus. She won't dream of offering free accommodation with a free-of-charge felting course. »Who is on the lookout for that has to turn elsewhere.«

☞ But of course Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann does not wish to exclude joint felting projects from the outset. »Of course it may happen that feltmakers spontaneously decide to work together«, she says. »And probably there is a lot of felt talk at the dinner table.«

HELENE WEINOLD

Overnight stay portal

www.bewelcome.org
Group »Felt«

Inga Dünkelberg-Niemann

www.aki-filz.de

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Courses Set for Life

In the Manufacturing School Stellwerkstatt in Saxon Switzerland Teenagers Working with Wool Grow in the Process.

At the carding machine two young women mix rose- and lilac-colored wool fibers for a kind of unicorn-fleece which should later be felted into spring-inviting cushions. These two took up the chance for personal advancement, to explore their capacities and to later apply self-assuredly for an apprenticeship or job after graduation from secondary school or junior high.

☞ Stellwerkstatt – this name refers both to the school premises in a former train

station building of the town Wehlen in Saxon Switzerland and as a metaphor that certain courses are set there for the future.

☞ Ariane Flick teaches the youngsters in the Stellwerkstatt wool production department. Felting, in her eyes, is a good image for a new life orientation: »Cut! – The wool is shorn. Once cut off it carries the past within. Now it is time for a new order, for a chance to change. The intense commitment to the material results in a unique product which can find its place as a ball in the hands of playing kids or as a cushion in a garden café. The fleece can also be further refined, there is always another step.« She likens this process to the mental and practical development of some of the young people in the workshop.

Spinning and Felting Hours

The project proceeded from the study »Sheep Make Landscape« in which Andrea Riebe researched the regional sheepholding, wool and its processing on behalf of the Förderverein Kulturlandschaft Sächsische Schweiz (Friends' Association for Cultivated Landscape Saxon Switzerland). In 2005 this study led to a lively workshop with spinning and felting hours supported by several regional partners. In the same year the Arbeiterwohlfahrt (Workers' Welfare Association) opened a wool-and felting studio in Ehrenberg where women who had been out of work for a long time found a job.

☞ As of September 2006, the workshop was enlarged to employ twelve young people with the means of the European Social Funds (ESF). Ariane Flick was appointed functional manager. She is a feltmaker herself who had won a regional felters' competition with her felted cushions serving as regional natural reserve souvenirs.

☞ Over the years the project developed into the Manufacturing School Stellwerkstatt which moved in the railway station building in Wehlen which had been abandoned for ten years.

☞ The focus of this social project (part of the Professional Support For Youths) continues to be the processing of local wool. In the meantime, eight young people between 15 and 25 years each either process raw wool of local sheepkeepers, spin or felt it.

Silent Carding

Some girls can live out their feeling for colors while carding at the manual carding machine. They also become quiet in the process, as Ariane Flick has

often seen. »Others like the elementary experience during wet-felting with warm water and soap. Sometimes the group is joined by one or two of the young men who full the cushions or felt balls, some even like to work at the loom – maybe the technical challenge there is higher.«

☞ For some of the students it is hard to remain motivated over 6 hours, for that reason the tasks vary: »Dry-felting of figurines, the sewing of prepared felted elements to flower tendrils, knitting and crocheting experiments and sometimes a round of Activity with words around the subject wool.«

Main Product Cushions

The main products made by the group are cushions used on chairs and benches in some surrounding restaurants in the Saxon Switzerland area. They attract the eye of tourists who like to buy them as souvenirs. »Before Christmas the youngsters are allowed to make presents of their own«, Ariane Flick says. »There you can see very well to what extent they have learned their trade, what they really understand, since sometimes they really go beyond themselves at times.«

☞ The young felters feel appreciated in their work at regional fairs or during direct deliveries to clients, they take in the joy of the buyers. Ariane Flick is happy for and with them. The Stellwerkstatt even participates in the organization of the annual Wollfest taking place in Bad Schandau during the last weekend in April: They have their own booth and fashion show, work in the knitting café or with children in projects around wool and felt.

☞ In the meantime the Stellwerkstatt has not only become an important place where young people set their life course but has turned into a reliable partner of the regional »Wool Network«. Ariane Flick loves her work, not least because of her steady contact with young people. »The talks and discussions that arise over the felting table, the themes and words that overlap are often nearly as chaotic as the fibers that we keep working with warm water, olive soap and our hands. At the end of the day there are some new, colorful cushions, stacks of filmy wool fleeces, tensed warps on the loom as well as broken felt needles, unfinished work, matted balls of wool. Of course, felting cannot solve all problems or fulfill any dreams. But the offer is there and every day the kids can take small steps toward a craft and a life.«

HELENE WEINOLD

HatCap

»HatCap« is the name that Annemie Koenen gave her light headdress creation for all seasons. It is as becoming as a hat and comfy as a cap. Due to the many pleats it can be pulled far over the ears or to cover the neck.

Material

- ☞ Fine Merino-silk roving (made by Wolwerkplaats Moeder Aarde) rainbow-colored, in Magic and Fuchsia, 50 g each
- ☞ Small woolen balls in Fuchsia

Felting Accessories

- ☞ Bubble foil or impact sound insulation material for the stencil
- ☞ Permanent marker
- ☞ Scissors
- ☞ 2 skidproof pads each 80 x 80 cm (alternatively gauze, fly screen, a piece from a drape or something similar)
- ☞ Olive soap
- ☞ Ball sprinkler
- ☞ Bowl
- ☞ Towels
- ☞ A kind of shape to form the HatCap over, e.g. a head dummy
- ☞ Pins
- ☞ Fabric clips

Preparation

Measure the circumference of the head for the stencil. In our example we proceed on an assumed 58 cm circumference. At three layers made from half the amount of wool the shrinking factor is 1.6. The stencil size has to be calculated as follows:

$$58 : 2 = 29$$

$$29 \times 1,6 = 46,4$$

- ☞ The cone-shaped stencil has to be approx. 46,5cm wide and 60 cm high. The side edges of the lower half have to run steeper than in the upper half.
- ☞ Draw the stencil onto the bubble foil or the thin impact sound insulation foil and cut it out.

Instructions

1. Cover the working space with a big towel. Put the skidproof mat on it and the stencil on top.

2. We work mirror-inverted and start with the decoration for what will become the outside later. Distribute the Fuchsia-colored little wool balls on the stencil.

3. Place a layer of wool in the outside color (here: Magic) diagonally until the edge of the stencil.

4. Put a layer in the same color lengthwise and let it protrude over the stencil about half an inch.

5. Moisten the wool thoroughly with lukewarm soapy water and the ball sprinkler, always in the direction of the upper layer.

6. Put the second skidproof mat on top, press the air out of the wool without rubbing it and add some more soap if needed. Soap helps to compress the wool but you should not use too much of it.

7. Take the whole »sandwich« (the two skidproof mats with the stencil and the wool in between) up with both hands and turn it around. You should not use too much drive; it functions just as well if you hold your horses.

8. Remove the upper mat and lay out the ornaments (the small woolen balls) on this side of the stencil.

9. Turn the protruding wool at the stencil's edge over tightly.

10. Layer the width of the free part of the stencil with wool.

11. Repeat the steps 4 to 6: Lay out the second layer of wool lengthwise with some protruding, moisten the wool, put the skidproof mat onto it. Press the air out of the wool, turn the workpiece with the two mats over, remove the first mat and turn the protruding fibers over.

12. Put out a layer of wool in the color of the inside (here Fuchsia) in the width with half an inch protruding.

13. Moisten the wool thoroughly, press the air out under the skidproof mat, turn the workpiece over, remove the mat and complete the second side with the wool destined for the inside.

14. Moisten the wool again on this side, put the mat onto it, press the air out of the wool, turn the workpiece around, remove the upper mat and turn the last protruding fibers over. Put the mat onto the workpiece again and start to felt.

15. As soon as the fibers don't slip out of place anymore remove the mat and continue to felt with your bare hands. You can feel how the fibers connect. Work both sides in this fashion up to the stencil's edge until all air has gone out of the wool and the fibers of all three layers have connected.

16. Cut the HatCap at the lower edge of the stencil but keep some distance to the corners.

17. Remove the stencil and turn the HatCap over, so the decorated side is out.

18. Now we proceed from the inside out in order to stabilize the ornaments and to render the edges of the stencil invisible.

19. To achieve this we work each quarter of the work piece separately. Fold the HatCap edge to edge and treat it in this fashion, then open it up, turn another quarter piece, put it together again and continue. Make sure that the edges are precisely on top of each other and correct the form accordingly.

20. Only when the edges of the stencil cannot be seen anymore and the HatCap feels like a wet piece of washleather the rolling can start. Wind up the HatCap in the width first and roll in order to reach the correct measure for the head circumference. We have more tolerance in the height. Also »quarter« the HatCap again and again, roll it about 20 times, open it, correct the form, turn the HatCap another quarter, wind it up again and continue to roll it.

21. In the end the HatCap should be 2 to 3 cm wider than half the head circumference. This additional width is necessary so the edge can be rolled up.

22. Rinse the HatCap carefully in order to get the soap out and tumble it dry. Then take a rolling or fulling pin and treat the surface with it.

23. If you want you can shave the HatCap, which enhances the colors and the silk fibers in a pleasant way.

24. Roll the lower edge of the HatCap up and fix it with long pins.

25. Put the HatCap over the dummy head or hat form.

26. Push the HatCap down, build folds as you please – either irregular or even ones- and fix them with fabric clips. Remove the pins from the rolled-up edge and model the edge until it is beautifully rounded.

27. When the HatCap is completely dry remove the clips and »massage« the felt where it was indented.

INSTRUCTIONS AND PHOTOS:

ANNEMIE KOENEN

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Wolf's Tooth and Ram's Horn – Felting in Armenia

In January 2019 Mary Nagy und István Vidák travelled from Tbilisi, the capital of Georgia, in a small bus, called Marshrutka, through spectacular, wild and romantic landscapes to Armenia – as always on the lookout for traces of the local felting traditions. Here is their travel report.

We reached Jerewan after seven bumpy hours in heavy snowfall. The calendar showed Januar 2019. From a friend we received a photo where a new felt object had been placed onto an old felt carpet. This photo in hand we knocked on the door of Lala Mneyans workshop. Much to our surprise the language soon changed from Russian to German. It became clear that Lala had studied German, taught it in schools and keeps contact with some Dutch felters. She told us about the Armenian felting tradition:

«Near the Sewan lake is a city which is today called Gavar. There I was born in 1955, the then was Nor Bayaset. My grandparents lived in a village near Nor Bayaset. They lived in a Tonratun, a traditional square house with a Tonir (bread oven), a central indentation with an in-built ceramic vessel for baking of bread. The smoke was deviated through a round opening in the ceiling. Around the fireplace lay patterned felt carpets.

☞ We always practised a much-loved ritual. In the evening our grandfather sat us on the carpets and put a low table over the Tonir. Now we could hang our washed, cold legs in the lukewarm oven. After supper Grandpa told us fairytales, then we went to bed.

Six Different Words for Felt

There are six different terms for felt in the Armenian language which are used as synonyms at different places and at different times. Felt is already mentioned by Armenian historians in literature from the fifth and seventh century and later as well. This testifies to the ancient, steady development of the felting tradition in Armenia.

☞ As you certainly know, Armenia used to be much bigger than it is today. The main part of the Armenian Highland with the mountain Ararat belongs to Turkey today. Next to the Van lake in Western Armenia in Turkey there was a small Armenian settlement, Vosm. There lived the most skilled and most famous specialists as wool pounders and feltmakers. One of them, the felting master Armenak Amrikyan (1887-1975) said in his memories that he was born there and moved to what is today Armenia about the time of the First World War. He wandered from one sheep breeder's family to the next. In order to clean and card the wool he used a traditional kind of arch called Anegh. The combing and felting of wool are closely connected.

☞ In the eastern part of Armenia, the feltmakers from Aparan, a small city in the north of the Republic were especially famous.

☞ Feltmaking was always a welcome occasion for festivities in our country, complete with eating, singing and dancing for the family and the whole village.

☞ Mostly felt carpets for home were made, but other felts for different purposes were made as well (Taghik), for example the material for the square and hexagonal tents where the herders and their families lived in the mountain areas on the summer meadows. The felters made also sweat blankets (Taptshak) and horse rugs (Dziu Tsatskoz). Of course, these specialists were also well-trained in making headgear for both sexes. The Armenian names for men's and women's caps are Gdak and Kolos. Also, shepherd cloaks were included in the production range. From extra fine lambs wool, they made big pieces of felted cloth which were additionally embroidered and served as wall hangings. The name for the fine felted fabric is Asrap. I still have a beautiful old, patterned felt carpet that I inherited from my grandparents.«

Two Patterned Carpets

We followed Lala Mneyan's advice to stop at the Gavar county museum on our way back to Georgia. In a house which was approx. 100 years old, looking similar to that of Lala Mneyan's grandparents, we saw not only numerous tools and objects for daily use of the life then, but next to a big earthen jug that was dug into the ground we found two patterned felt carpets.

☞ The basic color of the carpets is bone-white, the pattern nut-brown. The motifs were cut out with a hand-forged pair of scissors from pre-felt without waste. They are positive and negative at the same time. On the right side of the show room was a big wooden pedestal with a backrest. Over this was draped a big brown felted carpet with white motifs to sleep on. On the wall hung a black shepherd's coat, which is called either Kulab, Japundschi, Ayzenakatsch oder Gabanak

World of Motifs

Basically, on every carpet you see long rows of so-called dog or wolf's tooth ornaments (a variant of zigzag) and sometimes angular ram's horn motifs. The overall picture is both graphic and imaginative. At the edge there is always a border and in the middle so-called eyes (rhombuses). Red sun motifs are rarely found next to the white and brown patterns. Outside of the border often the date or initials are shown. Both are helpful to find out by whom and for whom a carpet was made. The oldest specimens we saw were from 1909, the most recent ones from 1960.

Masters of Their Trade

During the Soviet era, the Russian ethnographer E.N. Studenetkaja discovered a felted carpet made by the Armenian master Anuschawan Manukyan in 1942. This rare specimen is today part of the collection of the Russian Ethnographic Museum in St. Petersburg. As per Manukyan, the masters working there until today are either Armenians who survived the genocide and came as refugees or Turks who went to Armenia looking for a brighter future.

☞ Felting is an ancient craft and great mastery has been achieved in both Armenia and Turkey. E.N. Studenetkaja explained that the motifs, tools and working methods are very similar in both countries. It was very rare that Armenian families possessed colorful, patterned felt carpets named Kurasanki which were traded and bought from the Horasan region in Iran.

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

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