

filzfun – The English Supplement

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Dear Readers,

people who are passionately committed to the subjects feltmaking and felt as material – as are the filzfun readers – have known for a long time that felted fashion comprises a wide range, from sturdy clothing for everyday use to Haute Couture. Natalia Ostrovskaya's creations amply prove that – breathtakingly mise en scène by the photographer Aigyl Khusainova and the fashion model Lee Yun-A. Rejoice with us as of page 26! Amongst others, Natalia Ostrovskaya has invented a tecYique for finespun, softly draping scarves where viscose fiber strips are connected through felted wool strips. She explains this method to the filzfun readers in a detailed step-by-step instruction as of page 33. Also, the felt artist and blogger Brigitte Funk – Key word: Parallelfunk, the name of her blog – allows a glance over her shoulder at the felting table. As of page 48 she shares the secrets of her Double Resist TecYique, by means of which she creates wonderfully sculptural snail shells from pre-felt and fine wool fibers.

NOTE

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

Do you feel like immediately getting to your own worktable to give it a try? Then we would be pleased to receive your own interpretation of Ostrovskaya's or Funk's ideas. Send us photographs of your snail shells, scarves or any other felting project described in the filzfun – like Claudia Hecker did, who felted a moose's head following Angelika Geißler's instructions from our filzfun Special no. 6. She topped that in making a complete moose, called Sverre. Read his story on pages 56/57.

There is a lot more to be found in our fall issue, e.g., interesting exhibition gleaning, information concerning the almost extinct Zaupel sheep and artful embroideries on felt from Uzbekistan. We wish you a lot of fun reading!

*With best regards
your filzfun-Team*

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redaktion@filzfun.de
The winter issue will be published on
November 29th 2021.
Editorial deadline: September 14th 2021.

Women felt artists exhibit

Thirteen well-known Dutch felt artists show their contemporary work in the show »Kunst Gevilt« in the gallery De Gehoorzal in Den Dolder near Utrecht: from 24th to 26th September: Annie Veldkamp, Joke van Zinderen, Anneke Spijker, Linda de Beer, Monika Loster, Miriam Verbeek, Karen Bruinsma, Anja Schrik, Charlotte Molenaar, Anneke Copier, Claudio Varone, Adrian Salomé and Marije Kooi. Among the exhibits are ornaments and small works of art as well as wall hangings. In some of them metal, ceramics or recycled materials have been processed together with wool.
www.stichtingparts.nl

Margit Röhm is Chairwoman of the Filz-Netzwerk

The members of the Filz-Netzwerk e.V. chose Margit Röhm as new chairwoman and Tanja Kahl as cashier in a postal vote. The election supervisor Bettina Caspari published the result at the occasion of the online members' meeting in 2021. Margit Röhm and Tanja Kahl follow Susanne Schächter-Heil and Barbara Steffen-Munsberg, who belonged to the managing board of the Filz-Netzwerks for six respectively eight years and who ran no longer.
www.filznetzwerk.de

Filzkunstweg Added On

The Internationale Filzkunstweg (International Felt Art Path) in Tisens near Meran in South Tyrol, which opened in 2003 is about to be developed further. The tourism organization Tisens-Prissian and the South Tyrolean Felt and Wool Association invite felt artists to contribute with works of art. Big, firmly felted from sturdy wool, preferably from South Tyrolean Mountain Sheep with no plastic filling or chemical treatment are called for. The objects are shown out

in the open and should withstand the elements as long as possible. The cost for accepted objects can be charged. Send your application to Elisabeth Hofer per mail:
edith.hofer@rolmail.net

Green Sky and Blue Grass

How color impressions are named and categorized strongly depends on language and culture. In Japanese poetry the grass may be blue and the sky green, for example. Consequently, the subtitle of the show »Grüner Himmel, blaues Gras« (Green Sky and Blue Grass) is »Colors put the worlds in order«. It runs until January 30th, 2022, in the Weltkulturen-Museum in Frankfurt am Main. In about 200 objects from around the world, e.g., New Guinea, Polynesia, the Amazon region, East Africa, Tibet or Java the exhibit deals with the manifold meanings of color as a cultural phenomenon.
www.weltkulturenmuseum.de

Second Place for the Dream Guy

Bettina Caspari's dream guy is hand-felted and wears a knitted tunic with a Jacquard pattern and a shoulder bag. With her lovingly made doll the felt artists came in second in the Schoppel Knitting-Award »Strick dir deinen Traumtyp« (Knit your dream guy) after the crocheted and knitted-on figurine Adrian Blumenbunt by Raphaela Nickel.
www.facebook.com/SchoppelWolle

Hope for the Textile Market

Textile artists and artisans would like to offer their products again at the textile market Benediktbeuern in the Maierhof of Benediktbeuern in Upper Bavaria on September 18th and 19th – if the Corona situation allows it. An exhibit is planned under the motto »Cow and More« by the Afghanistan Embroidery Project Guldusi and different workshops. Whether at all and in the affirmative

how the market will take place will be published on short notice at the organizers' website.
www.textilmarkt-benediktbeuern.de

Felting en Plein Air

The theme »Filz und Draußen« (Felting Outside) inspired many artists in exciting ways.

Animals and plants, sitting apparel, bags, swings, plant containers and wool dispensers for birds – these are only a few of the inspirations that the Filz-Netzwerk's second felting challenge brought forth. »Filz und Draußen« (Felting Outside) was the motto in times of the pandemic. »Whether it is a felted bag that we can take to a café, the cushion you may take along when you want to sit on the small wall opposite the ice-cream parlor to enjoy strawberry and cream or a small, funny figure left sitting at the fountain – it is all about photos of felted objects in the public sphere«, as the organizer and chair of the Filz-Netzwerk had presented the challenge at the end of May. Before the deadline in August we received photos of more than 30 imaginative objects that were shown on Facebook and the Filz-Netzwerk's website. ♣ A photo of the collection's largest sculpture came as Birgit Samson's contribution: She had planted a tree more than three meters high in the woods and had felted it around in red. Also Irene Reinhardt's wheat spike was not only impressive through its masterly skill, but again also by its height, i.e. 1.5 meters, towering over a wheat field near Coburg. One would like to see how the artist's second object, a drone made of an old felted-around oil can, ventured to film the field from above.

A Pebble to Swing on

Annemie Koenen's felted pebbles and cords, distributed among real stones on the ground or integrated in a wire-mesh fence, have grown a little moss in the meantime and so connect themselves stronger and stronger with nature and its elements. Monika Derrix felted a huge pebble around a swinging plate – the inside lining of Black Head wool and the outside with a sturdy Mountain Sheep wool. »These pebble swings would grace

every yard«, gushes Margit Röhm, »a fabulous idea!«

☞ Blossoms and fly agaric mushrooms sprout from Bärbel Theilen-Schnieders' felted pebbles. Apart from that, the artist invites to a cup of coffee with a felted coffee pot suspended over a felted cup in a wooden frame.

Hiking Cushions for Friends

Kerstin Scherr, Kerstin Waizenegger and Christine Rusch all shared the idea to felt cushions. The latter made hiking cushions as a comforting gesture because the visit to her friends in the North of Sweden had to be cancelled due to the pandemic. Kerstin Scherr reworked her bench outside the house with colorful sitting mats and Kerstin Waizenegger upholstered her watted deck chairs with hand-felted, embroidered cushions in noble grey and natural-colored wool and cuddly sitting furs. The self-made cushion Heike Spiekermann was given by her daughter has been a trusted part of their car's travel equipment over the years. »It has accompanied me on the driver's seat or on the front passenger seat to the US, Australia, Spain and Iceland«, Heike Spiekermann writes.

☞ Katrin Bigl made herself another faithful travel companion: her favorite backpack, which she felted already in 2017 after the first module of her »Fit in Felt« education from Mountain Sheep, Gotland and Australian Merino wool. »It is of great help to me to manage my everyday chores, it lolled around at a sandy Baltic sea beach and hiked with me at the Balaton in Hungary at 40° C«, as she describes it.

Hedgehogs and Snails

Through Elisabeth Grates's garden a life-like hedgehog family wanders about, among the salad plants in Carmen Wagner's vegetable bed two perky snails catch your eye and Meike Raßbach had a colorful butterfly land in the lavender hedge. Bärbel Helfrich made the brightly colored roly-poly Kunigunde and an impressive, huge spider and accompanied her contribution with a witty poem in German.

☞ Angela Teuchert contributed a verdant, green-blue patterned chameleon. With the second object, a girl on an old school chair, she strives to heighten the awareness about the pressure young people are under today regarding their future outlooks. The small blue doll that Susanne Schächter-Heil placed in a niche in a graffiti-covered

wall enjoys the sun and seems to be less of a worrywart.

Wool Fibers for Birds

Helga Steegborn demonstrates her heart for birds with a felted duck and a fish which serve as dispensers für wool fibers that might assist in building nests. She also grows plants in a felted pot, which withers over time and fades into nature – like the plant bags on a wall hanging made by Christine Rusch.

☞ Steph Selke, acting as a guerilla felter, disguised a signpost, the back of a bench and a chair in a zebra pattern.

☞ And that »draußen sein« (being outside) in Corona times might mean also »celebrating outside« becomes obvious in Angelika Bona's photos: She created the decoration for a wedding en plein air – from the cream-white bottle to an exclusive classy ring case shaped like a conch.

☞ Margit Röhm, the initiator and driving force in the wings of this art event sounds thrilled: »I simply have to express my joy and to compliment everybody involved. So many artists have taken up our challenge with great creative skill and enthusiasm. For me, it is a veritable feast to be able to show those objects to the world. Our community is getting closer even though we are separated in space and circumstances.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 12-13

Encounter at the Banks of the Danube

»*Filz im Fluss*« (*Felt in Flow*) is the theme of the forthcoming *Felt Encounter in Niederaltaich in 2022*.

»A heartfelt and inspiring meeting – analogous and in color«, is what Delia Grimm looks forward to, i.e. the 27th German speaking Felt Eincounter. Together with Sandra Korte and Susanne Regen she organizes the latest issue of the biggest felters' meeting in the German-speaking countries which will take place from in Lower Bavaria from March 10th to 13th 2022. This year it is held at the Landvolkshochschule (LVHS) St. Gunther in the heart of the

Niederaltaich village in the rural district Deggendorf next to the Danube.

Changeable Material

☞ This year's motto »Filz im Fluss« (*Felt in Flow/Felt in the River*) invites to an intellectual pastime. On the one hand it refers to the physical closeness of the LVHS to the Danube. This meadowy landscape can be reached on foot in just a couple of minutes. On the other hand, it resonates the moveability and changeability of felt, its wide array of processing methods, technical approaches and use in art, handicraft and educational work which are fathomed by felters worldwide.

Learning from Each Other

The organizing teams first concern was to enhance the inspirational flow between felters in general and teachers and students in particular. After long months of digital transfer of handicraft skills, the exchange and networking, the mutual forging of ideas and the possibility of learning from other in person have top priority. As usual, this is achieved quite informally in the available open working spaces.

Several Short Workshops

Additionally, interested parties can book various short workshops ranging from goldsmith's art, button-making and several felting projects. The yearly general assembly of the Filznetzwerk e.V. is on schedule as well as evenings of collective felting and celebrating. Whoever has more time at her or his hands can book one of the four preliminary courses before the actual event.

☞ »We look forward to new faces and old acquaintances – so we can keep felt in flow«, Delia Grimm announces.

LENA FUCHS

27. Felters' Meeting

Detailed information about the felters' meeting and the preliminary courses with Ricarda Aßmann, Claudia Blickling, Delia Grimm and Kerstin Scherr will be available on the website of the Filz-Netzwerk from October: www.filznetzwerk.de

Textile Art in the Virtual Realm

The digital Textile Art Berlin 2021 aroused a lot of interest.

The times for fair, market and exhibition organizers are hard. So, the Textile Art Berlin was first postponed from summer to fall last year due to the pandemic only to be completely cancelled finally. The team around Nathalie Wolters wanted to avoid that happening again this year and decided on the Internet as a suitable platform for the renowned textile art fair: Instead of the premises on the Phorms Campus Berlin Middle the digital fair hall was open three days without entrance fee.

Felmakers' Exhibits

You could discover 29 individual shows as well as contributions by 78 participants. Amongst others, several felt artists showed their objects, for instance Susanne Weber, Yvonne Zoberbier (see page 16) and Sawatou Mouratidou (see page 17).

☞ Apart from that many online workshops and active taking-part events were on offer that could be booked with the lecturers' beforehand. Annemie Koenen for example invited interested parties to communal embroidery of felted bracelets in three online workshops.

Creative Red

At the Textile Art Berlin sampler exhibits have tradition. There usually is a previously agreed-upon color in which the participants should make their contributions in a 20 x 20 cm format. The cancelled fair in 2020 had the theme »Das kreative Rot« (Creative Red); and additionally for the online fair 2021 the organizers settled on the motto »Hell auf Dunkel« (Light on Dark). The textile art objects – felted, sewed, appliquéd, embroidered or decorated with beads or handmade buttons – were also on show on the web pages of the Textile Art Berlin during the duration of the fair. Sigrid Kohn published an impressive choice in her review in the digital Textile Art Magazine.

Dresses from Tags

Upcycling of a special kind is the special brand of Pia Fischer, who presented her most famous dresses made from clothes'

tags, ties, zippers and other surprising materials in video fashion shows.

☞ The organizers are overwhelmed by the echo: 5300 visitors and 73 500 clicked-on pages were registered. »Many compliments concerning the quality of the presentations reached us per mail and by phone«, Nathalie Wolters is happy to report: »This is the result of a communal effort!«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 16

Simplicity and Silent Greatness

Yvonne Zoberbier's needle-felt sculptures at the digital Textile Art Berlin fair.

In his programmatic writing about the beauty ideal of the German Classicism »Gedanken über die Nachahmung der griechischen Werke in der Malerei und Bildhauerkunst« (Thoughts on the Imitation of Greek Art in Painting and Sculpture) from 1755, Johann Joachim Winckelmann first used the two terms »edle Einfalt und stille Größe« (noble simplicity and silent greatness) and compared his artistic ideal against the playfulness and superficiality of the Baroque and Rococo: »Das allgemeine vorzügliche Kennzeichen der griechischen Meisterstücke ist endlich eine edle Einfalt und eine stille Größe.« (The general exquisite characteristics of the Greek masterpieces finally are noble simplicity and silent greatness.) These words came to my mind when I saw the latest objects made by the felt artist Yvonne Zoberbier in her exhibit »Menschenbilder« (Images of People) at the occasion of the 16th Textile Art Berlin which was held online.

Felted Stone

I had no idea at first that the artist actually did concern herself with the Greek Classic sculptures and figurines, for example in her sculpture »Stein« (Stone). The quiet face, the shut eyelids, the regular features, held and embedded in the felted »Stone« – all speaks of a soulful that makes you speechless and curious. Looking at it, you will experience a lot of room for your own inner dialogue with this piece of art.

☞ »In my opinion, the classic Greek statues are the most beautiful sculptures ever made. They have been fascinating me ever since my youth«, so Yvonne Zoberbier. These days she studies the different forms of stone erosion and how felt can be transformed to resemble smooth, shiny yet hard marble. She seeks to connect the hard stone with soft wool to render her sculptures more life-like and to celebrate the beauty of men and women in her own way: »You need a lot of stamina in order to harmonize both materials in your mind, to make fractures and cracks visible with the felting needle and to make felt as smooth and pure as marble.«

Subject Femininity

This she achieves in an admirable way – especially with her female sculptures and torsos. The subject femininity and the beauty of being a woman is most dear to her heart. These small, delicate bodies which come out of the artist's hands seem like a kaleidoscope of female emotions and expressive power.

☞ To see those pensive, delicately shrouded, vulnerable elf-like figurines, the flawless, seductive bodies that grow self-consciously out of the felt/marble leaves you with something eternally unsaid, unfathomable. Maybe this is because they mirror the artist's intuitive creative process. Nothing is intended, but a silent flow that stems from a deep emotional and human maturity turns into art.

DR. KATRIN THEILE

PAGE 17

Anthropos – Being Human

Sawatou Mouratidou deals with existential questions in her textile sculptures.

What is mankind? What is specific about being human that connects us all? And what makes us different always, as individuals or groups? How can living together in different cultures be successful? The textile artist from Vienna, Sawatou Mouratidou, ponders those questions in her work under the title »Anthropos – Mensch sein« (Being Human). One could follow her thoughts and objects twice: online in the scope of

the digitally held Textile Art Berlin fair and physically in the kablo gallery in the middle of Vienna together with Susanne Weber's poetic felted images.

Respect and Dignity

Sawatou Mouratidou tells us that such questions have manifested themselves in her consciousness with regard to her own family history that spans over several countries. Many emotions were set free: »We all face a huge challenge in trying to convene most diverse religious and cultural aspects and structures to create a societal climate characterized by respect, dignity and individual rights for everybody.«

☞ Facing this sociopolitical background the first of Mouratidou's abstract image of mankind was a felted group of people, »The Gang«, in 2017 for the »Grenzenlos« (No Borders) show of the Maurer Werkstätten in Vienna. Further figurine assemblies connected by a special technique and coloring followed in Jahren 2020 und 2021: »Die Unscheinbaren« (The Unassuming), »Andras & Anakin« (Der Mutige und der Riese – The Courageous and the Giant), »Anefikti« (Die Unerreichbare – The Unreachable), »Minotaurus & Ariadne«, »Aliens« at at long last the larger-than-life single sculpture »Insight«. The artist strives that all figures find their way to each other through their inner life aspects and does not specify or emphasize problems of identity such as skin color, origin, sex or age: They are all connected by substantially being a part of mankind.

Characteristic Signature

When transforming those basic philosophical ideas into her work Sawatou Mouratidou always acts on the spot, trusting her instincts and her skilled hands. Wool has been her favorite medium for many years. In adding or working in extravagant fabrics or special kinds of paper her feltmaking is distinguished by an exciting surface structure. Finespun embroidery and metal part appliqués are the finishing touch. This combination technique in its delicacy has become a signature feature that cannot be mistaken as someone else's.

☞ During visits to her studio, I was able to follow the sculptural developing over a couple of months. Always keeping the motto or theme or idea in mind fibers are laid out – a lot of Mountain wool this time, combined with Merino, the colors seem to come out of their own. Wool and fabric are combined to

pre-felt surfaces. Body framework grows to different heights and one can see the frame behind it: Rump, neck, head. Then surface design comes into play. Sometimes, Sawatou Mouratidou focuses on detailed facial features: Then the viewer becomes entranced by telling eyes or a finely modelled face that peeps out coyly behind gossamer veils.

DANICA BEYLL

PAGES 18-19

Adorning Space at Felletin

29 international artists presented their wall hangings in Felletin.

»Habiller l'espace« (Adorning Space) – was the title of the felt art exhibit 2021 in the gothic church Notre-Dame-du-Château in Felletin. This small village with 1600 inhabitants in Central France hosts the Journées Européennes du Feutre (European Felt Days) every two years. Its seventh event schedule had to be cancelled this year due to the pandemic and postponed to April 2023. The felt art exhibition was shortened to a period of six weeks but after all it was possible to show it in public.

☞ 29 artists from ten countries took part in this show where only objects with a size of at least one square meter were allowed. Three German feltmakers contributed as well.

Street Art Aesthetics

A total of three felted wall hangings with graffiti-like fish depictions by Irene Reinhardt were accepted by the jury. The Franconian artist places her objects »Lichtbringer« (Lightbringer), »Ooops!« und »Manta, Manta« in street art aesthetics: »They are not difficult to understand and establish direct contact with the beholder, even more so since the fish look directly at us. The fish seem to have gone astray and found themselves, much to their surprise, on a wall. To work out all desired details Irene Reinhardt worked with several wool layers percolating each other. For the foam she used the wool of Coburg Fox Sheep, hinting at her hometown Coburg.

Spirals are her Brand Name

Katja Hannig's wall hanging »Adorning colours« with its innumerable colorful felt spirals has been inspired by Friedensreich Hundertwasser's art. »Spirals prove to be a constant of my felt art, they can be found in all my objects«, she writes in the exhibit catalogue. Her object made from Merino wool and Tussah silk with a diameter of 125 cm adorned the stairs of the altar.

Homage paid to Kasimir Malewitsch

Hanne Raisch-Gass refers to the Russian artist Kasimir Malewitsch's painting »Weißes Quadrat auf weißem Grund« (White square on a white ground) from 1917 with her 100 cm x 105 cm object »Le carré blanc« (The white square): »At the stone wall of the gothic church the white square opens a window into an indefinite space.« A net-like color gradient from dark to light connects to reality by means of shadows and transpositions.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 20

Felt Art in a Walnut Field

Karen Bruinsma shows her master class work in the Botanical Garden in Leiden.

Among the plants in the Hortus Botanicus, the Botanical Garden in the city of Leiden in Holland a surprise was waiting in June: Woven, quilted, made from bobbin-lace or felted objects brought color and structure to a walnut field on the garden premises.

☞ 12 textile artist showed objects they had made in their 2019m master class. »For a whole year we were allowed to work in the Hortus Botanicus around the subject »Present and Past« – each of us in her own individual technique«, explains Karen Bruinsma, the only feltmaker in the group.

The Change of the Seasons

Instructed by their lecturer, the artists wandered about, took photos of inspiring plant motifs and they learned a lot about garden's history. »Step by step we developed ideas for our own work«, says Karen Bruinsma. »I focused on the seasonal changes, the cycle of growth, blossoming and death.«

Medium Print with Leaves

Within the framework of the master class she made her first experiments with ecoprinting. »I was allowed to cut off leaves and to print them via mediumprint onto nuno felt«, she describes her way of working. »I fixed the prints in metal circles the edges of which were bordered in a braiding technique. The circles represent the different seasons, the colors the shining natural hues.«

»It was originally planned to show the different objects at the Textile Festival in Leiden last year, but it had to be postponed to 2021 due to the pandemic. A special challenge presented itself in making objects that could weather the outside elements. It was not so much a problem for her, Karen Bruinsma stated, because felt is very weather-resistant. »When my felted circles are outside the rain, wind and sunlight leave their traces. I like to think that my work is slowly becoming a part of nature itself.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 21

The Joy of Creating

Berta Knab's sculptural felt objects in the Gunzoburg gallery in Überlingen.

A lovely triad, consisting of photographs by Günther Henry Schulze, drawings by Wilfried Düker and felt art by Berta Knab was on show in the Galerie Gunzoburg at the occasion of the exhibition »ver-sus« organized by the Internationale Bodensee Club e.V. (IBC) side by side with the Landesgartenschau in Überlingen.

»Berta Knab created a series of objects – representing the metamorphosis from seed to blossom, from beginning to perfection – especially for this show and as a symbol for the present times.

Horse and Goat Hair

»I love designing different shapes«, the artist says. In her felted objects she combines wool with other textile materials, often with horse or goat hair, sometimes even her own. It is important to her to make different surface structures using different kinds of wool. »This natural and ancient material makes my artwork restful and warm. The objects touch the heart with their hidden charm or make you smile. They have their own

will and humor and they are sturdy yet compliant and sometimes seem even weightless.«

The Play of Form and Color

Working on three-dimensional objects is always full of surprises and you never know what you are getting in the end. »I love to play with different colors and shapes. Sometimes I have an idea, I want to express something. I begin with a form and vary it. During this process it becomes clearer and clearer to me what I actually want to say. This feeling makes me very happy. And the objects really become alive. They laugh, gab and fight – they communicate.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 22-23

Connection across Continents

The International Feltmakers Association (IFA) has met the challenges of the pandemic creatively.

The IFA was formed in the UK in 1984 with the aim of fostering an international interest in felt, to promote members' work and to keep members in contact with one another for the exchange of knowledge and ideas.

»The IFA has grown and developed since those early days and is now organized into 17 regions across the world; each with their own IFA representative and an increasing proportion of its 1 400 members from outside of the UK.

»There is a team of volunteers who form the IFA Committee and do their best to promote feltmaking and remain relevant to the membership.

»The pandemic and cessation of 'normal' life required the IFA to be more creative and inclusive in its communication and support of members; holding our first online AGM in 2020 and a two-day online AGM and Conference in March 2021. These events were streamed live on Facebook for those unable to book a place via Zoom and all of the proceedings made available to members via our YouTube channel. We couldn't offer a full conference and workshop experience, but we also commissioned exclusive tutorials from four leading felt

artists; Fiona Duthie, Nancy Ballesteros, Judit Pócs and Nicola Brown, also delivered to all members of the IFA via our YouTube channel.

»As an international association we have always been acutely aware of the challenge of keeping in touch with all our members, but the pandemic forced us to be increasingly creative and imaginative to remain visible, responsive and relevant. The success of our initiatives means we will continue to offer online events to all our members as well as hold physical events when the pandemic is controlled.

»With galleries, museums and venues closed and travel severely restricted we launched our first online exhibition in August 2020 with the theme Kaleidoscope. The launch of our second online exhibition with the theme Reconnect, coincided with the virtual 2021 AGM weekend at the end of March. Our exhibitions can still be viewed from our website. We continue to be very active on social media.

»One of the activities less affected by the pandemic has been the IFA quarterly journal, Felt Matters.

»We have a modern, attractive website full of news and information for members and non-members. Members can showcase their own felt in the members gallery and tutors can promote their workshops and events. You can view our online exhibitions and learn more about the IFA and view content on our YouTube channel.

»Education is a critical part of the IFA, promoting and encouraging the skills for making high quality felt which is fit-for-purpose. A committed team is behind the development of online content for Discovering Feltmaking modules one and two and also the support and development of the IFA Certificate in Feltmaking (CiFT).

»We are a not-for-profit organisation established to promote felt in all its forms. Membership is open to all. The association is non-selective, and we encourage everyone with an interest in feltmaking from the beginner to the professional to join us.

ALLY MATTHEWS
www.feltmakers.com

Fascinating Variety

The Russian felt artist Natalia Ostrovskaya has only been felting for five years. In that brief period of time, she has created several impressive fashion collections.

Everything started with a coat in 2016 – or, for that matter, with no coat. Natalia Ostrovskaya could not find a coat for the interim season that she really liked. During her Internet research she discovered a hand-felted model and was immediately taken by it.

«I realized that I could not only make such a coat myself, but that I could make the fabric for it with my own hands», she recalls. «I had no previous experience whatsoever and I set out immediately to explore the secrets of felting.» Anybody who sees the creations of this self-taught felter on Aigyul Khusainova's photos can hardly imagine that they were all made within the last five years.

Delicate Strips

Being a professional art teacher, the 46-year-old artist had already had an ideal start for launching a creative career and she soon found out she had indeed talent. At first, she developed her so-called viscose strip technique and made many flowing scarves, dresses and even jackets. Viscose fibers are laid out in most delicate strips which are kept together at the connecting areas between two strips by wool fibers. The wool felts, but the viscose fibers won't, so the result is a finespun, openwork fabric. (As of page 30 Natalia Ostrovskaya describes her technique in a step-by-step instruction for felting a scarf). This, she says, has been her „entrance ticket to the felters' world». She understood how »wool behaves in connection with other fibers and fabrics. The method is plain and simple, but the resulting accessories are spectacular.»

«Soon she decided to make felting her profession. »There is so much variety! My modest experience shows that it is impossible to limit yourself to one technique only.«

A Childhood in the Countryside

Her husband supported her plans. One room with a balcony in their flat near Moscow, close to the natural reserve Lossiny Ostrow (Moose-Island) was turned into a working space. You always find a fragrant flower bouquet there. Natalia Ostrovskaya has been loving

flowers ever since she was a child. In the countryside, her grandfather made felted boots, her grandmother spun the wool of their own flock and knitted cozy socks. Little Natalia used to herd the sheep and watched their silent grazing: »Then I enjoyed the warm breeze, the fresh, aromatic scent of the meadows and the beautiful view.«

«The countryside, nature, spiritual rituals and memories of her childhood still are an important source of inspiration for the designer. »My art is characterized by love and care for nature and the environment.«

Working on Schedule

In the beginning she worked quite spontaneously. »I studied wool thoroughly.« Now she meticulously plans her objects in order to make their purpose and her dreams real. «»When you work on a bigger project you need a plan«, she believes. »You need a precise structuring of the day to mind your power, so you don't slave away to exhaustion. Working has to offer some kind of fun, after all.« A wet jacket, for instance, weighs about ten kilograms during the felting process, which means a lot of physical strength is required.

«The results, however, are spectacular indeed – like the fashion collection »Second Skin« with strong, sculptural structures in cool, blue-green shades. After so much time at the felting table she relaxes with Yoga, through hiking, taking pictures and cooking.

Fluffy Fur-Like Optics

After the »Second Skin« collection Natalia Ostrovskaya experimented further and developed another technique she called »Sheepskin«. It really reminds you of sheep pelts with a dense, wooly fleece, similar to raw-wool furs. »But I use a special Merino roving of up to 26 Micron, as used for knitting blankets«, she explains. »The method requires a couple of logical, simple steps which can be mastered by everyone who loves felting with a passion«. These days, she works on a new collection in such fur-optics.

Experiments with Different Materials

Yet she continues to be open for new ideas and she tries out all kinds of materials and combinations thereof: Merino-, Bluefaced-, Leicester- and other sheep breeds, Alpaka hair, silk, linen, nettle fibers and fabrics like Organdy, silk, muslin and chiffon. For some of her

projects she dyes fabrics, wool and other fibers herself. She passes on her expertise and skill in courses »because I really like to share my creativity with others.«

«The eye-catching designs by the Moscovite soon became an it-thing in magazines like the periodical »Traditions« from St. Petersburg. She was about to publish a book of instructions in that very publishing house, but »then came the pandemic and all plans were suddenly put to the back burner.«

«Meanwhile the Russian designer dreams of a big, well-lit studio and of presenting her collections in an exhibition, travelling to Europe and to be a part of the Milan Fashion Week. She found her calling in felting, she states: »I love what I do and I do what I love.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 33–37

Tutorial

Transparent Scarf with Viscose Strips

Contrary to wool, viscose does not felt. Natalia Ostrovskaya put this fact to good use in an elegant scarf: Alternating between felted wool strips, transparent viscose streaks shine.

Material

- « For a 45 cm x 165 cm scarf
- « 165 g combed viscose top (roving) in different shades of violet
- « 47 g combed Merino top (roving) in a matching berry color
- « Felting Equipment
- « Bubble foil
- « Plastic foil
- « Ruler
- « Fineliner, waterproof
- « A sheet of paper the size of the working table
- « Adhesive tape, colored, in the desired width of the strips (optional)
- « Ball sprinkler, water, soap, towel
- « Sander
- « Scissors
- « Garden gloves with nubs (optional)

Instructions

- 1 When working in this technique I recommend sketching the strips on a big sheet of paper below the bubble foil on the working surface or to mark the desired size with colored tape on the foil. All strips should be 4.5 to 5 cm wide so that both viscose and felted strips come out evenly.
- 2 Prepare the fringes at first. For the scarf here described we have an initial width of 55 cm of a total of 11 strips and you need 6 fringes for each end. For each narrow side divide a 55 cm piece of Merino roving in six equally thick strands. You decide how long and thick the fringes for your own scarf should be.
- 3 Moisten your hands lightly and roll each wool strand. Then wrap it into viscose fibers.
- 4 Moist the strand thus prepared and continue rolling it. Important: One end of the strand must remain dry!
- 5 Prepare all the fringes this way. The dry fiber parts at their upper end are later connected to the scarf.
- 6 Now the viscose and wool fibers are laid out for the scarf. (Due to its length, I first laid out one half and later (see step 16) the second half.) In this technique Merino and viscose strips alternate. The outer strips at the longitudinal edge must be wool. Please keep this in mind for your project planning. At first you lay out the viscose fibers. The edges of the viscose strips must meet where later wool strips follow which keep everything together. My fingers point to the area where a transparent viscose strip will be visible later. Lay out two layers of viscose fibers with a layer of wool in between. Should you, like I did, first lay out one half and later the other, you need for each half a fourth of the viscose fibers for each layer.
- 7 That is how the laid out viscose strips look. My advice: Instead of viscose you might use Tussah silk fibers or some other delicate fabric.
- 8 Now cover the connecting parts between the viscose strips with very fine strips of Merino roving. You can see that I laid out the viscose fibers crosswise and the wool fibers lengthwise. Important: The outer strips must be laid out 3 to 5 cm shorter so that the fringes

at the side edges don't get longer than the middle ones.

- 9 Put the fringes with the dry ends onto the wool strips at the narrow sides and spray them with some water.
- 10 Then put on the second viscose layer like the first.
- 11 The connecting parts between the laid out viscose fibers must lie on top of the wool strips.
- 12 Wet the laid-out fibers with soapy water and straighten the edges with your fingertips.
- 13 Cover the scarf with the plastic foil and start felting it on with a sander. Put the tool onto the wool strip and let it vibrate until the fibers are well connected.
- 14 Pay special attention to the areas where the fringes connect to the scarf.
- 15 Roll the fringes slightly.
- 16 Then roll the first half of the scarf up with the bubble foil.
- 17 Lay out viscose and wool for the second half just like for the first.
- 18 Here as well the fringes are fixed to the narrow side.
- 19 Then comes the second layer of viscose fibers. Wet this half with soapy water as well, cover it with plastic foil and felt it on with the sander, as described above.
- 20 Once the scarf is fully felted dedicate some time to the fringes. Roll them on top of the bubble foil to thicken them. They should only be slightly moist. Take off the excess of water with a towel.
- 21 To render the fringes especially smooth and even you might want to wear the garden gloves.
- 22 When the fringes are well-felted, bundle the scarf up and throw it 50 times lightly and then fifty times with verve onto your working space. Take off the excess of water with the towel.

23 Pull the scarf apart and control the edges.

24 Then drop the scarf in clear, warm water and rinse out the soap. Continue to do so until the water remains clear.

25 When all the soap is gone take the scarf out of the water, squeeze it and spread it out. Fold it over in the middle diagonally, so that the fringes overlap on both narrow sides and cut them to equal length.

26 Felt the cut fringes additionally with your hands and a piece of soap.

27 Rub the soap bar lengthwise across the scarf's stripes, pull it apart and smooth it out, then throw it again. Treat the fringes once again and continue the process until the scarf has fully felted.

28 Rinse the scarf out once more (presumably with a shot of vinegar in the last bath). Then spread it out and let it dry. Afterwards the finished scarf can be ironed.

29 But even if you don't get around to ironing it, it still looks very attractive.

30 I wish you a pleasant wear of your unique accessory!

NATALIA OSTROVSKAYA

PAGES 38–41

Origami Felting

More than 25 years ago, Joke van Zinderen discovered felting and is still entranced by it.

It took Joke van Zinderen a long time to muster her self-confidence, claiming: »I am a textile artist!« But since her teenage days she has been familiar with textile techniques and tried out many of them. Her interests are many-sided still, e.g. Bojagi, the Korean patchwork, the Joomchi-technique with mulberry paper or leather processing.

Fits Like the Proverbial Glove

In the 1970ies she made her first felting

experiments with Texel wool that her mother used to spin. Joke van Zinderen remembers them as a complete disaster. Later on she made dolls for her own children and met a lady who hand-felted dolls' clothing. »My interest was kindled afresh and I took part in Anneke Copier's workshop«, she gushes. »I had the feeling of finally coming home!« This happened 26 years ago and it is still valid: »This technique fits me like a glove!«

» After this first workshop Joke van Zinderen took many other courses in The Netherlands and in England. During a conference of the International Feltmakers Association (IFA; see pages 22/23) in Exeter she met the Kyrgyz delegate who announced the first Kyrgyz felting symposium in 2001. »I travelled there, and it changed my life.« Many international contacts were established, she invited felt artists from all over the world to The Netherlands and in 2008 she took on organizing the IFA conference herself. Again, many connections and even long friendships ensued.

Working at a Special School

Years ago, Joke van Zinderen worked at a school for children with special needs and taught the children, amongst other things, how to felt. She realized the soothing effect working with wool had on them. »One of my students really got upset at the slightest change in her daily schedule. When this happened I just had to put a little wool in her hands and I could see how body and soul relaxed,« she tells us.

» Today, she works part time in an institution for people with skull/brain trauma. There she made similar experiences. »I really get into the matter these days to be able to use what I find in a larger scope.« The job is trying and her textile creative work helps her to upload her batteries. »This is really important for me to stay healthy and happy.« She had often thought of leaving feltmaking altogether, she admits, »but I always kept finding something new to try out.«

No Nuno Felt

The Dutch lady prefers wet-felting to all other techniques. She used to needle-felt a couple of birds once. »That was fun as well, but I like working with soap and water better.« Over the years she developed special skills in laying out wool fibers most finely, »one of the reasons why I never make nuno felt with chiffon silk. You can also make a really thin felt without silk.« She uses silk

only for surface designs but never as a carrier material below. Her advice: »A big amount of flax fibers on really thinly laid-out wool renders a beautiful shine and an interesting structure.« For her delicate scarves, Joke van Zinderen uses Merino or Wenselydale wool, but she felts also wool from other breeds like Wallis Black Nose, Stone Sheep and Mongolian sheep.

» She loves to dye wool and felt and uses the dyed material on leather and paper to make small memory books and bags. She uses both synthetic and natural plant dyes. When striving for a certain nuance she dyes the wool before the felting process. Finished felt or silk is designed in reserve technique.

A Living Room Studio

On the first floor of her house in the historic center of the small town Amersfort in Holland Joke van Zinderen had made a beautiful workshop for herself, but over time it turned out to be too cramped. When she has enough time to felt she turns her living room into a working space. »I roll up the carpet and I put a big table in front of the glass doors leading to the garden – simply perfect! So I have great lighting, a wonderful view and only a couple of steps to the kitchen to get me another cup of coffee or tea.«

» There she makes her intricate objects in Origami technique which is very time-consuming. »I think a lot about the designs, make pre-felts and I cut out various shapes. Then I felt each part in a single effort«. She doesn't plan in too much detail but tests the intended effects on small pieces of paper or felt.

» You can always tell my art objects from their design«, the artist states. »I love strong, graphic patterning and lines, therefore Origami as well. My pieces are never big, since I have not enough room. I don't use shiny colors but I love to combine colors and materials.«

» She thinks that felt is very pleasurable to wear, so she often makes clothes accessories, like Origami collars, but also framed or sculptural art works, booklets and bags.

No Bubble foil

Her hands are her most important tools. You won't find any bubble foil in her work room. For 20 years Joke van Zinderen has been felting only on a ribbed plastic mat. As she explains: »My hands tell me how to work, in which current state the felt is in and in what quality. To wrap up felt in bubble foil seems somewhat regrettable because you miss out on the exciting

felting process.«

» Special effects are not only achieved by integrating silk or flax fibers or by tricky folds or resists, she also embroiders the finished pieces often or decorates them with beads. She manages finest, even stitches which never fail to flabbergast her clients: »As one said: ›These stitches are so tiny, and you are so tall!« We had a good laugh together.«

» Inspiration is found literally everywhere, »sometimes in the pattern of the pavement, sometimes in fashion.« Taking walks in natural surroundings, she keeps finding »wonderful shapes, forms and angles«, of which she takes photographs with her smartphone and refers to them again at home for further artistic use.

» The artist deeply regrets that she has not been able to teach for months now. She keeps getting inquiries for Origami courses or reserve dyeing, but everything depends on when she will be able to safely work with several people in a single room again.

Exhibits in Great Britain

Until then, she looks forward to several shows: At the end of September her works are shown in the group exhibit Kunst Gevilt in Den Dolder und during the KunstKijkDagen in Amersfort. On two days in October and November she will be a guest in one of the studios of the KunstKijkRoute in Amersfort. Next year her objects are exhibited in Devon, England – like it was the case already in the past with events in Amsterdam, Finland, the US and even Hongkong.

» In the meantime, Joke van Zinderen has long been seeing herself as a true textile artist. »Textile art has definitely changed my life, it led me to many interesting places and enabled me to meet artists from all over the world. It has made my life so much richer.«

HELENE WEINOLD

Feltmaking Keeps Her Young and Chipper

Trudi Janker one of the oldest active felters in Germany.

There must be only a few active felters at Trudi Janker's age: The lady from Munich who has worked over decades together with Mari Nagy and István Vidák will celebrate her 89th birthday in September. She still sits at her felting table, and she had worked on the contributions of the two Hungarian textile experts for the filzfun until 2019.

Beautiful and Noble Things

»I already learned from very early on that you can live with more ease and joy when you surround yourself with handicraft objects«, she tells us. In her flat at the Kleinhesselohe Lake and the Munich English Garden there is only room for »beautiful and noble things«, as she puts it.

»The love for textile handicraft was not put into her cradle. After the secondary school certificate, she took on a two-year sales apprenticeship on a dairy farm, worked for the 10 years in a bookstore and an architect's bureau and then for 20 years at the Photogrammetry Chair of the Munich Technical University. Her marriage failed in 1964. »So I had to bring up my two sons alone and to make a living for all of us.«

»She always had had a faible for folk art. She booked courses in peasant arts, pottery and weaving and told us: »My hands learned to feel the different kinds of material processing.« Her first felting course, the initial drive for a decade-long passion followed in 1983 at the Ländliche Heimvolkshochschule Hohebuch, where her sister Hildegard Hage worked as director of studies until 2005.

A Felted Noah's Arc

First Trudi Janker learned from Frieder Glatzer how to felt a sheep. On her living room floor, she felted her first vest, followed by other objects of daily use like bags or playthings for her grandchildren Michaela and Daniel. Later their grandmother taught them to felt. Together they made a star, a moon, a hand puppet and a complete Noah's Arc with animal pairs that even found its way into an exhibit in the Pasing Fabrik gallery.

»There Trudi Janker made the acquaintance of István Vidák and they have been good friends ever since. In 2004 he mentioned in a letter his intention to establish an Internationale Filz-Ausbildung (International Felting Education) (IFAB) in Germany. Trudi Janker immediately assured her support, wrote letters in German and soon took on more responsibility for the organization. »I was lucky to make the 4 year-long training myself – these were unforgettably beautiful times«, she fondly recalls.

A Dress from Sari Fabrics

On a research trip to India with István Vidák and Mari Nagy she discovered the brightly colored Saris for herself and decided to process such fabrics in her graduation piece in 2008: in a »feel good« dress with felted-in Sari fabrics and loosely fluttering Sari sleeves. It was shown at the graduates' show in the House of Folk Art in Kecskemét.

»Felting clothes soon became the focus of Trudi Janker's work. For a while she had a working space in the Mohr Villa, a cultural center in Munich-Freimann. During that time, she made a whole collection of various tops which she still likes to wear. »Everybody can see them and they are much admired, whether at creative dance sessions or the moving bible work in the Erlöser Church, at concerts or other daily or festive events.«

»Further trips with the Vidák family led the enthusiastic felter, amongst other countries, to Hungary and Transylvania. Her Munich flat increasingly served as István Vidák's German office, since Trudi Janker co-worked on more than 50 expert articles about textile art, especially regarding the proper German translation. Her two sons Hans and Thomas offered their support by exchanging her old typewriter with a laptop and printer and making their mother familiar with the Internet and e-mails.

Garage Workshop

Trudi Janker had to give up driving due to her failing eyesight. She sees this rather positively, since the garage could now be re-used as a felting workshop. The time gained she uses accordingly: »In the meantime I have made many felted surfaces for sitting apparel and small wall hangings.« She mainly uses Tyrolean sheep wool and Merino- and Gotland superfels. »The many grey fibers that become loose during processing irk me, but the end result is always beautiful.«

»Trudi Janker does not shy away from strenuous feltmaking, not even at her age. Her motto is: »Go to work with spunk and joy, make a quaint design with a pleasing felt structure and – above all – good quality.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 44-47

The Big Crawling

With her ›beetle manufacture‹ Brigitte Funk has given much joy to the feltmakers' community. But her other works and experiments are very exciting, too.

They crawl around everywhere: Beetles made of firm, colorful felt with sculpturally designed wings, some with facet eyes from buttons, other with beady eyes, wire legs, impressive stags and an imaginatively structured body surface. Brigitte Funk make her exceptional animal sculptures from pre-felt and roving. With her detailed PDF instructions »Käfermanufaktur« (Beetle Manufacture) she has been a true inspiration for many felters to make their own fanciful insects.

Double Resist

The 55-year old artist from Gundelfingen near Freiburg has not only designed those cuddly critters but she developed a double resist technique to make sculptural, enchanting snail shells. Her first trials sessions date back to 2018, when Brigitte Funk pondered over the possibility to make a »roly-poly felt« with two resists in her blog parallelfunk.de: »(One could) first make a pre-felt around a resist, then cut it in pieces and felt it together again on a second resist... this might offer limitless possibilities!« The enthusiastic feedback to her contribution made her refine the technique further.

»It did not get past me that many feltmakers wonder how I make these shells or how to do this two resist thing«, she says. »I even had desperate inquiries from Canada and New Zealand,„ Nobody needs to despair any longer: As of page 48, Brigitte Funk unveils the secret of the double resist technique in a thorough step-by-step instruction.

Creative in All Directions

Whoever sees her intricate techniques and the surprising results may think

that Brigitte Funk is a born feltmaker. Actually, she recalls her first felting endeavors as being rather discouraging, although she had experience in all kinds of creative techniques – from knitting socks to Tiffany glass houses and stone sculpturing, painting and pottery. During a course at an adult education institution she made her first cuffs and a Nuno felt scarf. »The cuffs were hard as a wooden board and later turned into felted nuggets in the washing machine. I wore the scarf with pride although it was not very beautiful and the wool around my neck itched terribly«, so her self-critical comment.

»Still, felting bewitched her and »opened up a new universe«, as she says. As most felters she finds the many possibilities of the craft and the many different characteristics of wool most fascinating. »You can mix colors and create new shapes. Felt can be sturdy and hard or soft and fuzzy. It can last forever or rot on the compost.« But she never wavered in her efforts and continued to educate herself in courses at the Oberrot Felting School with Mey Heyvesdal, Inge Bauer, Ricarda Aßmann and Gladys Paulus, in an online course with Pam de Groot and via instructions by Corinna Nitschmann and Gabriele Mazaracis.

Different Kinds of Wool

Brigitte Funk implements her ideas in the wet-felting method, but states: »This could change, though. Not long ago I bought a 10-part felt needle set. I like to try out wool of sheep breeds worth protecting, like the roving of a Manx-Loagthan sheep, with very pleasant results.« She has also been using the fine hair of Angora rabbits. As yet, she has not made friends with Gotland wool and Alpaka, »but every kind gets a second (or third) chance with me.«

»In her objects she combines wool with other fibers such as Ramie or viscose, but mostly with silk fibers for Indian Saris. »This is like grating parmesan cheese over spaghetti!« She loves felting in silk fabrics, wool Etamin or colored bandanas from the flea-market.

»Partially, she dyes the wool – e.g. short-fibered Cape wool, Wallis Black Nose and Chubut – and the silk fabrics for Nuno felting herself with plants from her own big natural garden or with synthetic acid colors »when I need a special shade for a finger puppet, a worm or a beautiful pink for a rabbit's ear.«

Felt's Gotta Live!

»When it comes to felting, Brigitte Funk is striving for perfection, as she does in her job as a dental laboratory technician. »I don't like slovenly felted pieces. When I felt a square it is a square and not a rectangle or a trapeze.« With each new challenge she wants to try out or better things altogether: »I don't want to make boring felt. With me, it must become alive, offer a statement, it should make people wonder. Only then I am satisfied with what I do.«

»She mostly plans both form and the basic color exactly. »I belong to the tribe that make a test pattern here and there and calculates the shrinking factor.« Surface details, though, come to her on the spot, which makes the development similar to the process of evolution. »It may happen that I like a fiber-, felt or surface structure in an unimportant corner of a just-felted bag so much. Then I try to repeat this combination on a larger scale. During felting, I still come up with other variations and I felt until the creative thread snaps.«

»As her working table serves a waterproof table with an unassuming carpet underneath. »When water sprays about I have to quickly wipe it off because of the beech parquet floor«, she says. Her otherwise »patient husband« has his limits, after all. This is her reason to dream not only about presenting her work in a gallery one of these days but, quite profanely, of a working space with a big basin. Until then, she follows Theodore Roosevelt's advice: »Do what you can with what you have, wherever you are.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 48–53

Tutorial

Snail Shell in Double Resist Technique

In her self-developed double resist technique Brigitte Funk creates intricate sculptural snail shells. Here she tells us step-by-step how it is done.

Material

- » For 1 Snail Shell
- » 15 g Merino carded wool tops (roving), 19 mic, in green for resist 1
- » 5 g Merino carded wool tops (roving), 19 mic, in pink for resist 2
- » Plant-, Viscose- or silk fibers and fabric waste that can be felted in easily (optional)
- » Felting Equipment
- » Ball sprinkler, soap, water, sponge cloth
- » Bubble foil, 70 x 50 cm
- » A piece of synthetic gauze 70 x 50 cm
- » Sound insulation material, 3 mm thick for the resists
- » Scissors
- » Small fabric clips
- » A small carding tool or an animal hairbrush to roughen the felted edges

Instructions

1 Copy the contours of resists 1 and 2 onto the sound insulation foil and cut them out.

2 Put resist 1 (which is a bit wider) on the smooth side of the bubble foil. Put fibers and/or fabric waste onto it and moisten them with water so that they stick on the resist. Afterwards, the pre-felt is turned around so that the formerly inner surface shows outwards.

3 Divide the 15 g of wool in three equal parts. Divide the first portion again into three parts. Lay out two parts of this first amount of wool evenly on one side of the resist in a criss-cross manner, so that the wool sticks out over the resist. (Lay out the wool more thinly the closer you get to the top.) Cover the laid-out wool with gauze, water and soap it and press the air out. Turn the work piece around.

4 Revert the protruding wool fibers around the resist and smooth out

small nooks and folds. Fill the gap with the third part of the wool strand by fully enclosing the resist, so that now a smooth first wool layer is wound around the resist. Put the piece of gauze on, water and soap the work piece and press the air out. Remove the gauze.

5 Cover the wool with the bubble foil and felt it on through the foil on both sides. Take care that the wool always sits tightly around the resist's edge. You should rub from the outside to the inside.

6 Then roll the work piece lightly with the bubble foil 20 times from each side. (Each side means: Back and front of the resist from above, below, right and left – eight sides.) Then proceed to roll 10 times to each side. The wool should lie tautly around the resist now.

7 Lay out the second wool portion again in crisscross technique over the first wool layer and felt it on. Roll it only slightly from each side with the bubble foil about 20 times.
~ Proceed as described with the third portion but roll it only 15 times from each side. The wool should be wound around the resist tightly; shrinking should be only minimal. Now we have a pre-felted inside of which is felted more strongly than its surface. You should still be able to pull out fibers from the surface.
~ Soak the soapy water up with a sponge cloth through the gauze. Use a towel as well to get as much moisture out as possible, since the pre-felted drop form has to dry out thoroughly before we can continue working.

8 I plan to follow the cutting edge with a thread. (See image on page 49 The black line shows the cut on the front side, the dotted red line the cut on the back) Wind the thread in a spiral around the resist. Once the ideal line has been found secure the thread with the clips so it cannot shift anymore.

9 Cut the pre-felt open alongside the thread: Now we have a pre-felted ribbon and a cover or lid. Cut an U-formed opening into the lid.

10 Small corrections are always possible. Mostly, sharp edges occur in the lower part of the ribbon, I round them. Also, in the first cut after the top I retain some room.

11 Now we check whether the pre-felt fits around the second resist. Since everybody fuls and felt somewhat differently, the pre-felt's size can vary. Please keep in mind: Since the pre-felt has been turned around, the direction of the spiral now goes the other way.
~ The second resist always seems to be a bit too big, but it is important that the pre-felt lies around the resist really tightly. To achieve that, you can pull the pre-felt a little, bend or press it; small corrections can further be made with the scissors.
~ In the upper two-thirds at least a finger should fit in between the felted parts. Should the resist still be too big after several tests cut it a bit smaller. I recommend taking a photo before trying.

12 Roughen the felted parts' edges with a small carding tool or an animal hairbrush carefully.

13 Cover the second resist thinly crosswise with wool, the fibers should stick out. To wrap the resist around 5-6 g of wool may suffice. Moisten the wool with soapy water and turn the workpiece around.

14 Revert the protruding fibers close to the resist' edge and cover this side with the rest of the 5-6 g wool. Moisten it with soapy water and felt it only very briefly through the gauze. Soak the soapy water up with the sponge cloth through the gauze.

15 It will soon continue! In this case, the wool shouldn't dry.

16 Wrap the pre-felt like in the trying on in step 11 around the second resist and secure it with clips against shifting.

17 Put the work piece on one half of the gauze, cover it with the other half and moisten it through the gauze and soap it. Use more water and soap in this case and rub slightly on both sides, but extensively.

18 Especially the spaces between the pre-felt's edge should be thus treated. Turn the work piece, covered in gauze, around repeatedly.

19 Now remove the clips. By means of the gauze pull the wool towards the resist and rub the edges thoroughly as well – preferably more than less.

20 Last control before rolling: The green edges or the pre-felt have to lie closely alongside the pink wool.

21 Wind up the whole workpiece, covered in gauze, into the bubble foil and roll it from all sides 20 times.

22 Cut the cover (lid) open again and pull the resists out. Since everything is very wet and the resist sticks to the felt, it is helpful to blow right and left next to the resist into the hollow form: This loosens the sticky parts and the resist can be removed much easier.

23 Stuff the gauze cautiously into the hollow form. Now I turn around the bubble foil, which serves as a mat, so that the smooth side points towards the table.

~ Form the spiral form from now on into the third dimension: first roll it back and fro on the mat, then rub especially the felted edges and the trimmings with your fingers under the gauze and simultaneously from the outside.

24 Fold the pre-felted spiral all over, from bottom to top, toward the middle – in the beginning only very lightly.

25 I work my way up and down the spiral with thumb and index finger of both hands. (On the photos only one hand is visible, the other is holding the camera). Pull the gauze out.

26 Now the spiral lies on top of the cover, the spiral's top is in the middle. From now on you can press harder as more density is desired.

27 Pull the spiral apart again.

28 Bulge the hollow form with your thumb, the other fingers or with a modelling tool from the inside, then fold it again and make it more compact.

29 A scrutinizing glance inside: Through the thinly laid-out areas of the second resist shines the light. The felt there should be evenly thin without bigger holes. After a series of densifying and bulging no more light will get through.

30 Continue to form the snail shell and to pull it into a ball and densify it.

31 Pull the snail shell apart again and bulge it out from the inside.

32 Continue the densifying and bulging until you are pleased with the form.

☞ Rinse the soapy residue with hot water, whereby the snail shell should be firmly pressed into a ball and kneaded once again. The felt should be really sturdy and tight. Put the finished snail shell in vinegar water to neutralize all remaining soap.

33 Take the snail shell out of the vinegar water, press it out with a towel and model its final form.

34 The more time you leave yourself for the final forming the more perfect the outcome will be. When the desired form is reached let the object dry out completely.

35 The result is a wonderfully sculptural, coiled snail shell with beautiful curves.

36 Although all snail shells were made with the same resists, each of them looks different and unique. By means of other resist shapes or a different cutting open of the pre-felt many other individual snail shells could be felted.

BRIGITTE FUNK
www.parallelfunk.de

PAGES 54-55

Felted Memories

Four felted Alpakas are taking away some of Tanja Aulenbacher's grief over the loss of her beloved animals.

To combine working with children and animals: This has been a longtime dream for the childcare worker Tanja Aulenbacher from the Oden Forest in Hessen. Once her son and she discovered Alpakas at a farmers' fair they were immediately taken by »those soft souls, which are curious but never intrusive.«

Trekking Events

She learned a lot about Alpakas and after thorough research decided to manage Alpaka event sessions and trekking for children and adults. She was taught the necessary basics in a beginners' seminar about camels of the New World. She studied more and finally succeeded in getting her expert certificate for handling camels from the Old and the New World. This is officially required if you intend to work professionally with Alpakas.

☞ The search of adequate pastures turned out to be more difficult. But at long last the Aulenbachers were offered a leasehold. »Soon I was able to find four animals and I fell in love with them on the spot: Merlin, Al Capone, Dakota and Soy Luna,« Tanja Aulenbacher tells us. Together with Matthias, her husband, she built a stable and fenced the pasture in. Moving time for the small flock was at the end of October 2019.

First Hiking Trips

»All four of them were only a year old, and we had to adapt them slowly bear to halter and rope«, she recalls. »The first hikes led into the woods and across meadows, later we exercised leading the Alpakas on the sidewalks.« Soon both the family and the Alpakas were a well-rehearsed team: »Even my boy Elias, then five years old, could lead the animals without any problems along the roadside. They were in very good health and came running towards us the minute we showed up at their grazing ground.«

☞ This joy, however, did not last too long. In April 2020, as Elias ran in front of his mother to greet the animals he came back all shaken up: »Soy Luna breathes really strangely!«

Liver Leeches on the Pasture

The Aulenbacher family brought Soy Luna to the animal clinic in Gießen immediately, but it was too late: She had to be put to sleep. »The result of the medical examination was that liver leeches infesting the pasture were the reason, very dangerous for Alpakas«, Tanja Aulenbacher tells us. »Merlin, Al Capone and Dakota had to undergo a terribly unpleasant cure against these parasites, with which they were most likely infected, too. Now we had the choice between finding new grazing grounds or selling them.« A new pasture could not be found, and with heavy hearts the family decided to sell their animals.

☞ Matthias Aulenbacher could hardly stand seeing his wife's grief. That is

why he asked the felt artist Tanja Kahl whether she could possibly felt Alpakas from the wool the family had stored. Even though Tanja Kahl had had no experience so far in felting Alpaka hair, she accepted the challenge and searched further expert advice from two needle felt artists, Helga Steegborn and Ingrid Zuercher. Then she started her experiments.

Wet-Felt in Structural Design

»I carded mountain sheep wool together with the Alpaka wool and tried my skills at a small, lying down Alpaka that I wet-felted in structural design from 6 g of wool«, the felt artist remembers. She had already made a name for herself with her Fat Ladies. When, during a visit, she saw how much Tanja Aulenbacher suffered from the loss of her animals, she took on the order. At first, she made Al Capone in the size of 30 cm in wet-felting technique. »After the figure had dried I added on some Alpaka wool with the needle.«, she describes the end of the process.

☞ Extremely touched, Tanja Kahl reminisces: »The day that Tanja Aulenbacher took her Al Capone in her hands I will never forget – a tearful welcome!« Afterwards Dakota, Merlin and Soy Luna were made from their own wool and will always remind the Aulenbacher family of their short, happy time with their animals.

☞ Even Tanja Kahl herself was reluctant to say good-bye to her creatures, as she says, »but their new owner has granted me a life-long right to visit.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 56-57

From the Wall to the Woods

After a moose's head following the instructions from the filzfun Special Claudia Hecker felted an entire moose sculpture.

As an enthusiastic traveller to Scandinavia, I have always been fascinated by moose: they are so noble and ancient-looking. I immediately liked Angelika Geisler's instructions for a felted moose head in the filzfun Special Nr. 6. I used mountain sheep wool in different natural hues and asked my husband to saw a board to mount it on the wall. He

did as told, and uttered under his breath the memorable remark: »In my opinion, a moose belongs in the forest.« I laughed and said that too many parts of the moose were missing for that purpose. My ambition was kindled to felt a whole moose.

Rump Experiments

I pondered over how to construct the body, since there were many things to be considered: amongst others, sturdiness, and firmness of the felt, weight, wool amount and the fixing of the head. After many sketches I was able to approach the correct proportions from rump and legs to the head. Moose photos proved helpful indeed. At long last I had an approximate of the moose's body size. In order to achieve a three-dimensional rump, I used stuffed newspapers.

~ Next, I had the idea to build an inner skeleton for the rump and the legs from wire. I wondered how I should fill this wire skeleton with fleece wool and wrap it around to get the necessary stability. I would have had to use a big amount of wool which would have made the rump way too heavy, so this idea was abandoned.

~ At last, I decided to cut the rump core from a Styrodur block and formed it roughly. I settled on making the inside of the legs from wire, which also made their fastening to the rump easier. The entire framework for my moose was ready.

Many Layers of Wool

All that was missing was the fur. I wound some fleece wool around the legs and the rump and needled it on. Then I wet-felted it, put on layer on top of layer of wool fibers. These were felted on until the final form became discernible. The usual rubbing and fulling for a tight felt layer followed. Then the head was felted on, and suddenly he was there: Sverre, my moose.

~ True to the motto »A moose belongs in the forest,« Sverre had his photo session taken in my parents' natural garden in the Hunsrück mountains.

CLAUDIA HECKER

PAGES 58-61

Zaupel Sheep

Extinction and Comeback

The year is 2021 AD. The so-called Zaupel sheep is extinct in the whole of Germany... is that so? No! At the Bavarian border two small flocks of these unfaltering sheep still live in a small Swabian village.

~ How did that happen? In Central Europe the Zaupel sheep is long considered to be extinct. Only its close relation, the Forest Sheep, has survived in small numbers (see filzfun no. 70, page 56 ff) In 2000, the Swabian Farmhouse Museum Illerbeuren in the Unterallgäu district bought Zaupel sheep from the eastern Danubian region, from Middle-Transdanube (northwest of Budapest) and Batschka-Small Cumania. Two small flocks, numbering 24 ewes and two rams, are kept on the museum premises.

~ It remains unclear to what extent during the 200-year-long exile sheep from the Danubian region had been cross-bred with the newly arrived Zaupel sheep. Since there was a lot of human and animal migration from different, mostly southwestern and bordering regions of the Holy Roman Empire to the middle course of the Danube, a vast gene pool could have formed itself in the settlements with a regionally mixed population.

Look and Breed Description

Unfortunately, I can only describe the sheep that live in the Illerbeuren Museum. They are relatively small and delicate, with white wool and white heads. The rams weigh approx. 60 kg, the ewes 30 kg. Their height at the withers is approx. 50 to 60 cm. The gracile ewes are long-legged. They are smaller and lighter than the Forest Sheep, but other than the latter they breed only white specimen.

~ Typical for that breed is the short head with the wooly forehead. The ewes' nose is straight and narrow, those of the rams are slightly curved to the outside, a so-called Roman nose. Distinct are the small, pointed ears that protrude sideways. In these characteristics the Zaupel sheep differ markedly from other original breeds, like the different types of Stone Sheep. Zaupel sheep have a long, wooly tail which buckles shortly before its end. This mark is only visible after shearing. Regarding the museum sheep, only the rams have beautifully twisted horns.

Wool

As with all ancient breeds the Zaupel sheep skin is of mixed wool. The awn hairs form the long top hair layer which protects the animal from the rain, and it has a lot of fine underwool and kemp which airs it. The amount of wool gained per sheep shearing is modest. The Zaupel sheep was most likely kept in small flocks for personal use, and it seems to have never been systematically bred. It adapted itself to dire circumstances since it had to feed in places where cattle could no longer graze. This sturdy sheep type is ideal for countryside and garden conservation today. The museum sells single animals for this purpose.

History

In the olden days the Zaupel sheep were widely spread in Southern Germany and possibly much farther. As a very original breed it was most likely prevalent in many parts of Central Europe in different stocks and variants. Its name derives from the fact that it is very fecund and grows easily: Zaupel means a she-dog in heat and the word was also used for a morally loose girl. The name came probably up for demarcation purposes from the Württemberg Sheep, the Merino country sheep. If there is only one breed of sheep it doesn't need a denomination, for the farmers it is simply »the sheep«.

~ On the website www.wuerttemberger-lamm.de, where the Württemberg Merino Country Sheep is described, one reads that Duke Ulrich prohibited keeping Zaupel sheep in 1536. I started to wonder what sheep his subjects could have kept instead. Out of curiosity as to what other breeds existed around that time, I took to studying artwork more closely. Luckily sheep (regrettably almost all white) can be often found in the Christian iconography. On panel paintings of the Dutch Gothic we see lambs with Zaupel characteristics, e.g. on »Johannes der Täufer in einer Landschaft« (John the Baptist in a Landscape) (Alte Pinakothek München WAF 77), attributed to Dieric Bouts, or on »Anbetung des Lamm Gottes« (Worship of the Lamb of God) of the beautiful Gent Altar made by the brothers Jan and Hubert van Eyck and mounted in 1432. The very delicate lambs portrayed have narrow, short heads, small, pointed, sideways protruding ears and a longish tail. These two paintings allow for the conclusion that the Zaupel sheep or its related stock were also familiar in The Netherlands. Also, the painter Berthold Furtmeyr from

Regensburg drew almost exclusively white sheep of that type in his miniature book illustrations. The nativity set in the Augsburg dome from 1480 has a sheep with a slightly broader forehead with pointed, protruding ears and a strikingly long pelt with wavy top hair.

☞ If one can soon find sheep that resemble the Merino Country stock on Dutch paintings, the Zaupel remained a standard model for Southern German artists. Hans Degler, for instance, carved the especially beautiful, life-size sheep in the middle shrine of the »Geburt Christi« (Christ's Birth) rendition on the high altar of St. Ulrich and Afra in Augsburg in 1604. The sheep's nose is remarkably short, its ears protrude horizontally and its fur is long and wavy. These are only very few examples regarding artwork, but we can conclude that this original type was a familiar sight north of the Alps. Next to that there were the different Stone sheep stocks in the Alpine region, whose wool is mixed as well. Their tails are also long, they have longer ears as well and occasional rams' noses may occur.

☞ Augsburg and the neighbouring free cities based their wealth partially on textile production and commerce. But linnen production prevailed, reaching as far as the Ötz valley to the South. This was different in England or The Netherlands, where a lot of wool had been processed already in the Middle Ages. This may be the reason why sheep were not selectively bred for wool quality and amount in Southern Germany before Merino sheep were imported from Spain to Saxonia in 1765 and in 1786 to Württemberg.

☞ In Württemberg, the Merino sheep was cross-bred with the Zaupel sheep. From these animals which had inherited the fine, quaint and fast-growing wool of the Merino and yet proved suitable for the rough climate and the sparse feeding grounds of the Swabian Alps, the Merino Country Sheep was bred. Even though 200 000 Zaupel sheep were counted in Bavaria in the mid-19th century, this uneconomic breed vanished from many parts of the country. Meat and wool yield were very low. Small

numbers survived with the Danubian Swabes and some are still kept in the Hungarian national Fertő-Hanság. Further stock includes the Forest Sheep, and the Šumavská ovce in the Bavarian and Bohemian Forest in Bavaria, Austria and the Czech Republic.

The Zaupel Sheep's Migration

1699 the Batschka region became an Habsburg possession. These rulers were committed to further an intensive colonisation of the Pannonian Basin that had been devastated in the Turk Wars. German-speaking settlers were encouraged to go there. Mostly in the 18th, but also into the 19th century farmers, artisans and former soldiers from Alsace-Lorraine, Palatine, Rhine and Main Franconia travelled mostly with the so-called »Ulmer Schachtel« (»Ulm box«, a kind of unelegant freight vessel) on the Danube to her middle course. A small number of the settlers were from Swabia, Bavaria, Austria, Bohemia, but also Spaniards, Italians and French came. The ones who migrated from the German-speaking west were called Danubian Swabians by their Slavic, Hungarian and Romanian neighbors; their sheep were called Swabian sheep or – in Hungary – Cikta Sheep.

A Look at the Wool

Museum sheep are shorn twice a year; so, have only a top hair of middle length and fine, not stuck together, dense underwool. One can clearly see the longer and thicker top hair, but the kemp hardly at all.

Felting Characteristics

As usual, wool at 10 g and 3 g each was laid out on a square of 20 x 20 cm and shrunk to the end. This very clean wool felts well and renders a solid, dense, hairy felt. With the 3 g sample I had to take care that underwool and kemp were well mixed. If only kemp hairs lie on top of each other the felt get holes easily. The 10 g test sample came out quite sturdy. ☞ One processing possibility, mandatory in medieval England, was to comb the washed wool which separates the underwool from the kemp. With the very elastic, hardly kinky underwool I felted

test samples of 10 g and 3 g and shrunk. The result was a denser, even and less hairy, smooth felt that shrunk a little less.

SILVIA RIEDER

WPAGES 62-64

Embroideries on Felt

The Uzbek's richly adorned blankets, bags and headgear are a matter of great fascination not only to Mari Nagy and István Vidák.

Afghanistan is at the southern border of Central Asia. Because of the numerous wars we were not able to visit this beautiful, multiethnic country in person. But we definitely were able to admire the exceptionally beautiful fabrics in museum exhibits, at antique dealers or carpet collectors. In this article, we would like to introduce you to a small group of Uzbeks, refugees from Afghanistan from a tribe called Lakai and to their embroidered felt blankets, bags and festive headgear – even for camels' heads.

☞ Let's begin our discoveries with the Uzbek felted tent, where the shepherds' families live when they travel with their flocks from spring to fall. We saw a similar tent in Uzbekistan near Buchara, unfortunately not quite as beautiful and less intact.

Artful Yurt Bags

During an exhibit in Rosenheim, the Museum of Ethnology in Vienna presented amongst other pieces, an Uzbek Lakai yurt. Inside, half a dozen of embroidered bags were hung up on a lattice. These bags are similar to those used by Afghan families. Locally known as Ok-basch, they were used to store clothing but due to their beautifully embroidered fronts and bags they simultaneously served as interior decoration. Regrettably we could not take a photograph. The tent and its furnishings were later stored in the Museum and have not been shown publicly for 15 years.

☞ For a long time, the Uzbek fabrics were cherished in Europe. Many people sought and bought the yurts, ribbons, silk, felted bags and childrens' hats made in that part of the world.

☞ We as well bought three yurt bags in the »Gallery of Nomad Textiles« in

Original Weight	Size Beginning	Size End	Shrinking factor
3 g	20 cm x 20 cm	7 cm x 7 cm	2,9
10 g	20 cm x 20 cm	9,5 cm x 9.5 cm	2,1
3 g Underwool	20 cm x 20 cm	7.5 cm x 7.5 cm	2.7
10 g Underwool	20 cm x 20 cm	10 cm x 10 cm	2.0

Amsterdam in 1993. These original vintage bags are now cherished treasures in our collection. The two bags on the left are embroidered, next to it is one with a canvas application.

☞ Because we could not be taught by the Uzbek shepherd women, we studied each detail meticulously. In the past decades we sewed thirty such bags and in 2020 we shot a 50-minute movie about the way they were most likely made.

☞ We believe that the bags had a double purpose. On the one hand, when the family moved, the roof poles were bound together with ropes in bundles of 10, over which one bag each was pulled at the top and at the bottom. These two bags were then fastened with rope so everything remained in shipshape during the travels. ☞ On the other hand, they served as storage for various tools and clothing inside the tent and fastened to a lattice once the tent had been properly furnished.

Male and Female Patterns

Formerly, the bags were individually embroidered and decorated. Their two sides have different patterns. In our point of view, one side seems to represent a »female realm«, the edges being softer and rounder. The other side symbolizes the male element, here you find more straight lines.

☞ In our imagination the tassels at the bottom represent a metaphor for a generation network. It is to be read upside down. The creator of the object in question is symbolized by the third tassel. Above this, one tassel is for the mother and above that one for the grandmother.

☞ Below that daughter and granddaughter are equally symbolized. The tassel next to it stands for the male branch, and the alternations of the family tree are symbolized accordingly. Right and left are further rows of tassels, depicting the relations. The tassels are made of either horse tail- or mane hair, and the colors change in a certain order as well.

☞ Felted bags with such embroidery were made until the 1930ies, in some traditional areas even until the 19-sixties. From then on, linen applications without embroidery became prevalent. Mostly, the felt's basic color is a natural brown, the canvas applications red. The edges of the cut-out patterns were sewed around after seaming them in a white chainstitch.

☞ Next to the bags the women embroidered felted floor carpets, childrens' caps as well as similarly-patterned headgear for camels and horses.

☞ The material of the child's cap shown here is cotton, embroidered with wool fibers. The patterning is similar to other the objects. The cap is meant for summer use. The ones worn in winter look the same, but the inside is lined with felt pieces. Children are considered a great treasure, and for that reason such richly adorned caps possibly were protective lucky charms.

Rams' Horns Motifs in Chainstitch

Apart from those yurt bags for their dowry, the shepherdesses made artful headgear for camels and horses. We discovered such a decorative piece in Istanbul in Mehmet Girgic's collection.

The basic material, as for the bags, is red felt with an embroidery made of natural brown wool yarn in the so-called Tschalma stitch. This motif is framed by chainstitch in a bone-colored wool yarn. The patterns of bags and headgear alike are compiled from stylized connected rams' horns. The edges are strengthened by the so-called Kabulish finger weaving.

☞ This technique can also be found at the bags' opening to render them more sturdy. The cords, braids and tassels hanging from the camel's headdress correspond to those of the bags. The tassels are made from either horses' hair or wool yarn. Their coloring is pre-determined. The headgear consists of several longish felt strips that were embroidered around and then sewn together. For that purpose, the women made a bigger felt which was then cut into smaller pieces. Nothing was left to waste.

☞ We have not lost hope that we will be meeting a shepherd's wife in Afghanistan or elsewhere one day, who can complement our ideas and findings concerning the making of the bags and the true meaning of those patterns. When we travelled through Central Asia, we often heard thoughts that fit the theme of this article. They have both a practical and transcendental meaning:

☞ »All what men cut with scissors or knives should be seamed or embroidered, otherwise evil enters the cut. Seaming and repairing is the main task in the life of these women.«

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

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