

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #70

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Dear Readers,

you will meet some rare species when leafing through this filzfun-issue: endangered animals in the project »Faces of Extinction« by Gladys Paulus (page 44ff.), the fabled Gruffelo by Axel Scheffler and Julia Donaldson that Katrin Orell has revived with a detailed elaborate costume (page 47ff.), and an almost as rare species as the banded anteater from Gladys Paulus' auction : male feltmakers. In her felting courses, the Swiss lecturer Ruth Bucci-Baumer has met some of these rare animals that quickly developed an enthusiasm for creative wool design. Worthy of imitation!

Communal feltmaking mostly fell victim to the pandemic this year. All the more, the participants of courses by Charlotte Schmisch (pages 16/17) and Heidi Greb (pages 18/19) rejoiced, on which Meike Raßbach has reported. More than 260 felt enthusiasts met at the first international online felt encounter held worldwide. Corinna Nitschmann has organized the digital workshop

week with renowned experts from Hungary. (Pages 20/21). In our portraits you will meet three artists from England, Germany and Switzerland: Molly Williams captures dancers' graceful movements in her expressive sculptures (Page 28ff.), Sabine Köhlert's felt art convinces through reduced simplicity (Page 34ff.), and Erika Graf designs fantastic felt fashion – often with rose decorations and an overall romantic hue. (Page 38ff.).

Maybe you find an occasion to a relaxing meditation in times, where we are all urged to stay at home. A perfect sitting cushion filled with spelt or rapeseed will come just in time. Carola Zeiger shows an detailedly illustrated step-by-step instruction on how to felt a cover for your personal meditation cushion. (Page 52 ff.)

We wish you an interesting, motivating and entertaining perusal of this issue.

*With best regards,
your filzfun-Team*

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.

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
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The summer issue will be published on
Mai 28th 2021.
Editorial deadline: March 16th 2021.

Postponed Felt Encounter

»Filzen ist (k)eine Hexerei« (approx. Felting is and isn't wizardry) should have been the motto at the 26th Felt Encounter in Tecklenburg in the middle of February. But the Filz-Netzwerk had to cancel the meeting because of the Corona pandemic. The event will now be paired with the Filz-Kolleg that will take place from 12th through 17th of July 2021 in the felto Filzwelt Soltau. The program will be published on the website of Filz-Netzwerk in due course.
www.filznetzwerk.de

Feltmakers' Meeting in the Border Triangle

You can choose from seven courses at the 5th Filzertreffen (Feltmakers' Meeting) in the Border Triangle which is scheduled for May 27th until May 30th 2021 in the Jugend- und Bildungshaus St. Arbogast in Götzis. Constanze Krög invites to experiments with rust coloring and the felting of seamless clothing. Beate Bossert designs interesting surface structures, fascinating veined felted pebbles and twine buttons in old-craft methods, and in Susanne Wetzels course »Viecheria« (approx. Critteria) sturdy felted animals suitable for play handling are made. Another course informs about felting in nursery schools.
www.wizardwool.at

The Play of Light and Shadow

Felt objects made by Annette Quentin-Stoll as well as photos and short films by Robert Quentin can be seen from the beginning of May through the end of September 2021 in the exhibit »Licht- und Schattenspiele« (Games of Shadow and Light) in the felto Filzwelt Soltau. The opening is scheduled for Sunday, May 2nd at 4 p.m. Towards the show's end a felting workshop with Annette Quentin-Stoll is planned. The exact date will be communicated on time.
www.filzwelt-soltau.de

Hanky Stories

»Taschentücher – Trost & Tränen auf kleinem Quadrat« (Hankies – Comfort and Tears on a Small Square is the title of a show in the Museum Herxheim in southern Rhineland-Palatinate open from April 25th through July 11th 2021. The curators Monika Brückner and Rosa Tritschler dedicate the exhibit to a small, unassuming every day accessory. Ambling through the five exhibition rooms the visitors will meet this 30 cm x 30 cm big piece of fabric in many facets: Art in handkerchief format, political resistance via hanky, the small item as a consort in your own biography, contemporary and social history, literature and poetry.
www.museum-herxheim.de

Klimt's Kiss Newly Interpreted

With a new interpretation of the famous painting »Der Kuss« (The Kiss) by Gustav Klimt, Isabella Scherabon came in fourth at the Art Award 2020 featuring the motto »Fake« by the Berufsverband bildender Künstler Österreichs (Sculptural Artists' Association of Austria) in the category Sculpture/Ceramics/ Art Installation. In her mixed-material collage from felt, metal and acrylic paint on canvas with a ash wood stand she connects »The ‚Kiss‘ itself, the painter Gustav Klimt who made some women pregnant and the #MeToo-history«. As she explains with regard to her work »Look! Open Your Eyes! Protect – Protest!«: »This man bears the traits of the millionaire and rapist Jeffrey Epstein, who sexually abused hundreds of young girls worldwide and has manipulated the American justice system with his wealth and power.«
<https://micis.at>

Public Award for Yvonne Zoberbier

A big success for Yvonne Zoberbier: At the show hosted by the CraftArtFusion-Project »Wir WOLLEn METALL« of the artists' association wollmodus in Vienna she won the public award. Her sculpture »Die Verträumte« (The dreamy woman) shows a self-absorbed, hunched female figure made from white wool on a metal ball. The award is also the ticket for the

next wollmodus-biennial: The needle-felting artist from Leipzig will definitely be a part of it in 2022.
www.wollmodus.at

Five Years of Feltmaking Fascination

Due to the Corona pandemic the felto Filzwelt Soltau postpone their anniversary celebration to May.

Where on Earth has the time gone? Is it really already five years that the felto Filzwelt Soltau first opened the doors of its monument-protected, historic felt storage building to the public? Between the ground floor, with a felt market and world shop and the lookout over the roofs of Soltau the Filzwelt offers various ways to experience the feltmaking sphere. Every day, that is – with the exception of the pandemic lockdowns.

∞ A small part-time team works hand in hand with honorary personnel and participants of a workshop for disabled people. Together we would like to share the fascination of a very special material with a diverse audience. Hundreds of guided tours and group programs during the past five years have strengthened our conviction: Felt offers a wealth of possibilities – for beginners as for experts, kids and the elderly alike, art or technical projects.

∞ From the visitors we keep hearing: »I would never have thought that felt can be so interesting, such fun.« And for us as well we keep discovering new things about it, e.g. at special exhibitions and other events.

Collages and Fashion

In the opening year 2015 felt was haptically presented in collages made by Ulrike Bonnke-Fürst. A weekend around the theme »Fashion felt« brought ten felt artists from four countries together in 2016. At the occasion of a fashion show, hand-felted clothes were much admired, ranging from raw wool creations over theatre costumes to brightly colored evening gowns.

∞ Wet-felted, touching big-size portraits by Sandra Struck-Germann impressed the visitors in 2017. Later the landscape impressions by Söhnke A. Richter caused

much wonder, since the wet-felted images looked like watercolors. Woven wool objects made by Ingelies Gärtner and Ilka Dankert presented this ancient textile technique. In 2019 ELMA caused a stir with breathtakingly lively needle felt art and in 2020 two huge wall hangings, more specific incredibly varied labyrinth carpets by Christiane Claren led interested parties onto felt dream paths.

Course of Lectures of the Filz-Netzwerk

In 2017, the Filz-Kolleg (Courses of Lectures) came to Soltau for the first time, only to return in 2019 and 2020 – each time these were days full of exciting encounters and inspiration, competence and creativity.

☞ Felt connects both fibers and people, and not only within the felters' scene. Felt is soft, presents no danger and can be worked on manually, it is an easily accessible and stimulating material which can kindle a communal sense across all borders: inclusive and integrative. Felt has caused this effect in the past years at numerous occasions. At the same time, the felto Filzwelt has steadily developed into a socio-cultural center, into a natural meeting place for felt and non-felt matters. Felt opens up rooms for manoeuvre – e.g. for a musical lecture from »1001 Nights« during the Lower Saxon Literature Days as well as for a whole week focusing on language and creativity for children with nine different mother tongues, as a contact point for a pre-Christmas Wishing Tree Event, reception place for greetings to the partner city that cannot be visited during Corona, as lecture hall, dance floor, gallery or seminary premises.

Celebration Postponed

After innumerable children's birthday parties, we wanted to celebrate the Filzwelt birthday in 2020 – and like so many others we had to abstain. Now we plan, together with our supporting institution, the non-profit Spiel foundation and our partner the play museum, a mutual celebration at the weekend of May 13th to 16th. (Ascension Day)

☞ For the next five years we wish for many other interesting programs and encounters and look forward to networking more – e.g. as of May at the exhibition of Annette Quentin-Stoll and Robert Quentin or at the felt encounter and the lectures of the Filz-Netzwerk in July.

ANTJE ERNST

PAGES 11-13

Felt Aspects

In Neckarsulm eleven artists were lucky to present their works until March 13th 2021.

It was quiet in the artists' scene in 2020. Many shows were cancelled or postponed, and the few that actually took place were usually opened without a jolly opening party. So, it was really beautiful for organizer Ulrike Hartrumpf and ten other felt artists that the long-prepared exhibit »FilzAspekte« (Felt Aspects) could be shown on the premises of the adult education center Neckarsulm as of November. It was even extended to March 13th, albeit with many restrictions. ☞ So Lyda Rump from The Netherlands could not bring her art objects to Neckarsulm due to pandemic rules. Instead, photos from two of her works »Basalt« and »Geoxideerd« – are presented on a framed poster.

Felt Art Variety

In the foyers of the first and second floor of the building only felt art objects are shown on the walls and in glass cabinets, none of them objects for daily use. »I wanted to convey the variety of felt art that is effected by different ways of processing but also in a mix with other materials«, Ulrike Hartrumpf explains her commitment: »We would like to ensure a solid place for felt art in the textile art scene. Further we intend to demonstrate to the public that felt can be actually turned into art objects.«

Intriguing Structures

Whoever strolls through the halls is easily convinced of the material's artistic variety: Eye-catchers are wall objects with intricate surface structures, as for example »Schmelze« (Melt) by Dagmar Binder, the fins' work by Dagmar Meyer, the monochrome, off-white exhibit »Under Construction« by Christine Rummel made from ten felted tiles, images like the black-and-white portraits »Huella Madre« by Beatriz Schaaf-Giesser or Claudia Cappiello's two-part, untitled piece with its stark contrast of rust tones and anthracite/black.

Sculptural Works

But there are also sculptural objects to be seen, for example the »Protea«-variations by Andrea Noeske-Porada, the sculpture »nod to be« by Renate Maile-Moskowitz, Ulrike Hartrumpf's liligree holed

»Torso«, Gabriele Wehrmeyer's intricate combinations of hard, smooth concrete and soft, fluffy felt or the needle-felted sculptures made by Yvonne Zoberbier.

☞ Especially for this exhibit, Dagmar Meyer, Dagmar Binder, Renate Maile-Moskowitz, Christine Rummel and Ulrike Hartrumpf designed square objects in the format 50 cm x 50 cm which can be seen in the hall of the first floor – identical in format but diverse in their personal style and expression.

☞ »Here is a thrilling show with the individual artistic signatures of the artists. It tells of these artists who process felt with a lot of imagination, skill and artistic understanding«, Ulrike Hartrumpf says happily. »The exhibits speak of the joy of experiments and the challenge of combining the material conditions with the great variety of their own ideas.« In a brochure, all artists are presented with their biography and personal statements; the objects are depicted in color.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 14-15

A Cabinet of Woolen Curiosities

Margit Röhm's mystical winter wonderland in Münsingen

A goblin astride a donkey, a dwarf, whose sledge is pulled by a unicorn, will o' the wisps, a sheep family and a goat at a washing trough: All these fairytale creatures have headed the goblin's invitation and populate the Triluna winter wonderland where magical, white blossoms are in full bloom. A friendly shining moon keeps watch. Margit Röhm, a felt artist from Ulm has thought this up and turned it into a felted scenery. It has been on show in the Wollwerk in the BT in Münsingen since the end of November.

Fantastic- Romantic Scene

»The idea for such a panopticon I had years ago already«, Margit Röhm tells us. »Initially I thought of a kind of horror chamber. But in the present my senses for horror have vanished, and I thought I would rather set my mind on a fantastic-romantic scenery.« She originally intended to exhibit her beautifully litged, about

four square meters big winter wonderland on fairs, but it turned out that many markets and fairs had been cancelled or that there simply wasn't any room left for it due to the distribution of the booths.

Disappointed by the Response

Because of such restrictions, Margit Röhm set up her diorama in a space at the Wollwerk in Münsingen at the end of 2020. »But unfortunately only a few people were on the street, and these didn't show any interest in this kind of entertainment, they only did their shopping fast and single-mindedly«, the artist says regretfully. »The second lockdown dealt the death blow to my try at a felt panopticon.« So she dismantled the show and offered the objects for sale. But the bewitching winter wonderland can still be seen on a video.

»I have learned a lot for the future«, the artist resumes. At the next effort she will try to design the scenery and the intricate electronic light system in such a way that the show can be effectively presented in a virtual surrounding.« Margit Röhm has new plans: »I will have another go at it, I want to design a travelling felt show maybe for the fall.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 16-17

Cube & Company

Charlotte Sehmisch explores the third dimension with her course at Filzrausch.

Cubes, triangular pyramids, other pyramid shapes or ,oloids': »Die dritte Dimension – geometrische Körper in einem Stück« (The third dimension – geometrical bodies in one piece) was the title of a course held by Charlotte Sehmisch. Six women grew curious and met at the Filzrausch workshop in Göttingen.

»To felt geometrical things seems odd at first. Sharp edges from soft fibers, right angles made of wool – is that at all possible? Of course, it is! Once again, the great design versatility of this fascinating material was proven. It is all a question of technique.

Triangular Pyramids and Oloids

Charlotte Sehmisch explained how the bodies are made. She had brought along finished felted objects and showed the

pertaining stencils around. Each of the participants had once made a paper cube at school. But what stencil to use, when the cube is supposed to be felted in one piece? Or even stencils for triangular pyramids or other pyramid forms? We got to know a new body, the oloid, which was only discovered in 1929 by the sculptor and mechanical engineer Paul Schatz. The mathematical explanation would exceed the bounds of this article; Wikipedia offers a detailed explanation. Just this much: The oloid has bow-shaped edges and no corners, it turns out highly suitable for bag-making.

»After we had decided on which geometrical shape, we wanted to make we chose wool from Frieder Glatzer's rich array. Then we cut the stencils, laid out the first wool layers, folded the edges – then we continued the layering, folded again, turned the piece around if necessary and always paid attention to felt around the stencils' edges firmly.

Don't Fear Geometry

The others' work progress went fast. Why on earth had I decided on a chequered cube, thereby being forced to cut out long pre-felt stripes? Yes, I thought, when I want a cube it should be an ambitious one. In the end I succeeded, always masterly assisted by the feltmaker and architect Charlotte Sehmisch. In the end there were cubes with dots, cubes as boxes with a lid or with folded fastening, a bright red triangular pyramid and an oloid with drop design in in reserve technique. The whole range of geometrical bodies was nearly exhausted, much was tried, and all lost their fear of geometry at long last.

Inlaid Foils for Hollow Spaces

Next to the different shapes we could delve into Sehmisch's special surface designs and experiment with them. A marked element is inlaid foils which keep hollows in the felt open, which makes for airy yet geometrical forms. Test samples were made to remind us of the technique once the course was over. We were always allowed to look over the artists's shoulder, and she showed us with great enthusiasm how the different structures were made, seemingly easy as pie yet fully logically.

The crowning event of this two-and-a-half-day course in design geometry was an extensive photo shooting with Frieder Glatzer. The old rail tracks leading by the Filzrausch company premises were a truly beautiful setting for it.

I am already looking forward to the next course with Charlotte Sehmisch at the end of July which will focus on LED light objects (see info box). There are still seats to be had.

MEIKE RASSBACH

PAGES 18-19

Vests in the East

A felting course with Heidi Greb in Doreen Lüpfer's studio in Annaberg-Buchholz

Doreen Lüpfer had long been keen on inviting Heidi Greb in her studio Lüpferdesign. Just around the 30th anniversary of the German Unification, half a dozen feltmakers met in Annaberg-Buchholz to felt together with the lecturer from the Isar Valley in Upper Bavaria under the theme »Vests in the East«.

At first, Heidi Greb showed felt patterns from various kinds of wool and curls from diverse sheep breeds. We marvelled at the combinations and the expressive surfaces. The vests Greb brought along were tried on with much enthusiasm, we talked shop about the different models and each participant soon decided on her own desired pattern – with and without stand-up collar, with straight or rounded corners, long or short and with or without fastenings.

Curls for Structure

Also, the choice of wool from the great range of wool and wool curls from local sheep, but also from different regions was exciting in itself. After it had become clear how the vests should be cut, we were concentrating on color and surface structure. Some participants had already showed up with clear ideas and suitable wool. Finally, everyone decided to work with the curly material and made their test samples.

Next step: the pattern! We laughed a lot when it came to the subject of bust enhancement, after all the vests should fit perfectly. After the shrinking factor had been calculated and the patterns were enlarged accordingly, we finally got to work.

Problems with the Wool

To lay out the bottom, trying to get to the secret to put the vest parts together, to distribute wool in the right strength and

as evenly as possible, felt it on, connect the parts, fulling, trying on and being happy about the result: So, it went on, at least for five participants. One had been wrongly counselled by a shepherd – the wool she had chosen refused to felt properly, although the test pattern had worked well. So, one vest was to be finished at a later date. In spite of her disappointment, also this feltmaker realized that there would be a finished specimen in any case before long. Even if the time scheduled turned out to be too short, five women stood on the side stairs of the wonderful St. Anne-Church at sunset on Sunday. They wore their new vests, still moist from tumbling and stood around Heid Greb, at the proper distance, of course. Heidi Greb decided on the spot to prolong her stay for another day.

Walking Down Memory Lane

Vests were successfully made – in East Germany and in the best communal manner. During feltmaking we talked a lot about the past 30 years. For Heidi Greb the course was a trip on memory lane. She told us that she received a perfect education in her fashion design studies in Schneeberg in the Ore Mountains as one of the first students from West Germany. And she will be back, another course has been scheduled already.

MEIKE RASSBACH

PAGES 20–21

International and Digital Felt Encounter

Courses online with more than 260 participants from 16 countries

»For a week we were outside reality. It took me a while to gain a foothold again, as if I had come home from a beautiful vacation«, Dagmar Lange describes her experience after the first virtual feltmakers' meeting worldwide. Corinna Nitsch had organized it, because a normal meeting in Hungary was impossible due to the Corona pandemic. More than 260 felters from 16 countries and four continents met for a week each day in front of the computer screen in order to felt together under the tutelage of four renowned Hungarian lecturers. »The background work was going on

already since February«, Corinna Nitsch tells us. »At long last 17 people were busy establishing this pilot project.« Felting happened almost as if the course had been held in person. »During work one could ask questions that were immediately answered by the teachers in translation.«

Jewelry and Hand Puppets

Anikó Boros showed how to felt her typical jewelry pieces with felted-in pebbles. Small and delicate movements, a sure instinct and much patience were called for. An assembly of several stencils and parting layers made it possible to make the small sculptures from small dishes that were put inside of each other. » Soon we were under Bea Németh's spell with her hand puppets and oven gloves. Next to the main task, which was felting a wolf, also dragons, a giraffe, dogs, sheep, goats and numerous fantasy creatures were made.

» Gabriella Kovács taught two projects at once: one was the felting of a chequered ball and the other that of a teapot lid in the shape of a small house. For the ball, the choice of colors had to follow an intricate method and a ruler and compasses were much in use before many different variations, partly with a sound core, were finally finished. » The small felt houses were not only useful for tea pots but serve as interior decoration as well. Apart from advice to plan the facade and conceptual ideas the feltmakers learned a lot concerning pre-felt and beautiful edge designs.

Scarves with Medium Print

Nadia Szabó brought a breath of fresh air to Ecoprint. With the example of delicate scarves, she taught the felters first to make a gossamery, light felt in combination with silk. After the felting the neckerchiefs were decorated with natural leaves in the medium print technique.

» Within the frame program of the project, two virtual exhibits were scheduled: On the festival's opening the teachers introduced their favorite works, and at the »final ceremonial ball« many of the felted objects from that one week were put on show. The educational framework included additional video courses and instructions per photos. Those who missed out on a day can resort to the online recordings until the end of 2021.

Online-Chat in the Fusselhof Café

Despite of the huge distances among the participants there was quite a lot

of sociability, even chumminess: Each morning the participants started their day together in Corinna Nischmann's virtual »Fusselhof-Café« (Fluff Yard Café) and in the evening everybody met in the »Betthupferl-Programm« (Bedtime Treat). Two felt-free days, where stretching Yoga was offered to relieve the joints wary from feltmaking, lessened the build-up of stress. At last, each virtual participant received a very analogous surprise parcel per mail.

» Not only the felters that took part, also the organizer Corinna Nitschmann was enthusiastic about this big success of meeting and working online. »Considering all the joy that resulted from such a virtual meeting we have to meet again in 2021. It would be a shame to let this kind of enrichment pass by.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 22–23

Feltmaking in Paradise

Petra und Marc Hermann's Wampendobl-Farm in Lower Bavaria is a meeting point for creative people.

The landscape in the heart of Lower Bavaria is remindful of Tuscany with its rounded hills: Willows instead of pines, yes, fields, meadows, woods – not particularly spectacular, but picturesque and idyllic. There is the Wampendobl paradise that knows neither fence nor gate. The chicken cackle greetings and follow us to the big three-side farm. It is isolated, a veritable arch in the middle of 12 hectares of biologically operated meadows and fields. Ancient domestic races live here free and appropriate to their species: chicken, ducks, Bavarian Land Geese, goats, llamas, cats, two Great Danes and about a hundred Krain Stone Sheep.

» Petra and Marc Hermann have re-built this almost ruined farm mostly with their own hands. Since 2006 they have been filling it with new life and welcoming guests who seek recreation in their holiday apartments.

Stone Sheep Wool for Carpets

The Krainer Stone Sheep are the reason why Petra Hermann discovered her love for felting. The GEH-certified wool of these unassuming milk sheep is relatively

rough, but it lends itself perfectly to the making of felted objects such as carpets, bags and cushions. Felting presents a welcome relief to many duties involved to run a farm. In her scarce free time Petra Hermann first taught herself the basics of felting. But she grew more curious over time. Since she cannot travel because of the animal care she invites skilled feltmakers to her farm instead. In this way she keeps on educating herself and she offers feltmakers a great possibility to spend a felting vacation in small groups and in a quiet, familiar atmosphere surrounded by nature.

A Felting Room with a View to Nature

For three years now, for example, Nina Demidova has been teaching her delicate technique to make seamless dresses and jackets regularly in the Wampendoble Paradise. Petra Herrmann has learned a lot from her, and she has become more skilled in her own feltmaking over the years, perfecting them. Also Gladys Paulus, Helga Steegborn and other well-known felt artists have already held courses on the farm. I myself have taught a course there on felting shoes and boots in the spacious felting room with four big working tables, complete with a riveting view of the surrounding nature.

☞ Marc Hermann greatly cherishes feltmaking, just as his wife does. He is the one who designs the sophisticated garments, which she in turn custom-fits for him. During the courses he is responsible for the catering and makes delicious bio-menus for his guests. When the feet hurt or burn after standing for long time at the felting table and the shoulders ache from fulling there is always the sauna, the whirlpool or a floating shell to offer relief and relaxation.

☞ What touched me most were the high esteem in which the farm animals are held and the loving care they receive. In this veritable paradise they are treated as equal members of their small community. That is one, but not the only reason to look forward to my next course at the Wampendobl Paradise.

SABINE REICHERT-KASSUBE

PAGES 24-25

Feltmaking is not only a Woman's Sphere

Ruth Bucci-Baumer is very pleased to have male participants in her courses.

Men are a rare, exotic species when it comes to felt encounters, courses and wool fairs and other events. István Vidák did a great service to the re-discovery of the felting craft 40 years ago. Bruno Bujack has researched the technical aspects of felting and documented his findings well. Frieder Glatzer (filzrausch.de), Gabriel Leithaus (hofkornrade.de) and Joachim Regensburger (schafwollzentrum.tirol) are often present as sellers of wool and felting accessories or as organizers of felting courses and pertaining events, but in the long haul women constitute the major part of felt enthusiasts.

A Hat for a Moutaineer

All the more Ruth Bucci-Baumer is always pleasantly surprised when men find their way into her courses and workshops. Many find to wool design via their partners – for example the sound artist Peter. »Sarah and Peter came for felting holidays in Tuscany to me«, she remembers fondly. »Originally only Sarah was into feltmaking, but Peter caught on immediately and took part with great verve.« Another male from Tuscany, »a mountain and nature lover«, was determined to felt a hat together with his wife, and in the end he was very pleased with the outcome.«

From Steel to Wool

Jack, »a fine, very sensitive young man«, as the lecturer says, is a male kindergarten nurse in Florence. Under her supervision he felted a stunning black hat. That opposites attract each other was proven by Markus Meyer from Ravensburg: This artist, more known for his steel objects, switched easily from hard metal to soft wool and felted a scarf with imaginative motifs.

☞ »The ‚wood guy‘ Davide, a special person who feels very close to nature, brought his own sheep wool«, Ruth Bucci-Baumer tells us. »We washed the wool in the stream, so he could felt a filet and a hat. In the end he was very happy with what he had achieved.«

☞ Paolo dal Maso is the chair of a weavers' convention and he wanted to

broaden his experience with feltmaking. »First he felted a cover for his scissors, which he has hanging around his neck when he is weaving«, she says. »After having tried out this and that, he finally felted a scarf as a present for his wife.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 28-33

Dancing with Wool

Expressive felt sculptures are just one artistic aspect of the versatile felt artist Molly Williams.

Colorful, long-limbed female figurines in expressive dance poses in off-white or brown, immersed in the state of deep contemplation – Molly Williams' sculptures are like none other's. The English artist concentrates on human bodies in motion. In her artistic work, she works freeze-frame, i.e. a certain moment in time is captured therein. »Through body language and our posture we convey a lot about our emotional state«, she has observed. Before she starts a new sculpture she looks at many images or videos from dancers and athletes and she also visits dance classes. Also Yoga or gymnastics serve as idea-givers for the 65-year old artist.

A Wire Skeleton

In accordance with each individual pose the figurative sculptures with their wet-felted musculature are felted over a wire skeleton that is between 35 and 50 cm high. Molly Williams prefers off-white or dyed Merino wool. It felts down quickly and yields a solid form. »I work with my own hands and a lot of hot, soapy water«, she says. »The whole process is rather strenuous physically. I like to decorated the felted skin with integrated silk fabrics. With free machine or hand embroidery I give it additional texture.«

☞ In sculptural aspects, she was inspired by works by Barbara Hepworth and Henry Moore. Her contemplative figures bear a similarity to her dancers, both types caught in a certain set of movements, »but I do need a lot more wool to fill up their form, and I prefer a smooth, life-like outer skin.« The muscles are made of Merino wool and covered with a silky, smooth ‚skin‘ layer of Bluefaced-Leicester wool.

Remote Textile Design Studies

Molly Williams has always, since her childhood spent in Africa and Turkey, worked on her sewing and textile art skills. But she only started an artistic career 15 years ago, when her four children were grown-up enough to do so. During a three-year distance learning course in textile design she experimented with various materials and created, amongst other objects, sculptures made of felt or clay. The body, body language and last but not least womens' issues were the basis of her undergraduate research and development. She covered her own body in colored felted skins the images of which were collaged. This collage that was later turned into a design for a digitally woven Jacquard fabric.

☞ For her graduation piece Molly Williams made a life-size, seated figure constructed from a chicken wire frame. She upholstered it with felted muscles and encased the sculpture in a felt skin layer. Another part of the installation was a matching woven Jacquard wall hanging. »For eleven years, this sculpture has been sitting at the same place in my garden, slowly blending into its natural surroundings,« the artist tells us.

A Garden Studio

After graduation Molly Williams taught Design and Technology (Textiles) for five years at Secondary School before she decided to work independently as a full-time textile artist. »My studio is a garden shed, not exactly beautiful, but I love it,« she says. »I have a big felting and sewing table there and many shelves full of fabrics and other materials.« Her personal computer is there as well, because she loves Photoshop and has started recording video tutorials and giving workshops online. »This year I compiled two video workshops on how to make sculptures,« she reports. »Doing that, I learned a lot for myself as well, e.g. how to establish a small video studio, how to put the different working steps on film, how the film is then cut and prepared and how to back up PDFs.« All this meant great fun to her, because she loves to teach: »Because of the pandemic I have further enhanced and perfected my online webinars, through which I am able to come into contact with feltmakers worldwide. I learn as much from them as they from me.«

☞ Molly Williams has passed on her experiences in sculpture felting in live

courses in the US. She was supposed to lecture in The Netherlands and in Australia but due to the pandemic her workshops were cancelled. Now the artist hopes to soon be able to travel and teach again.

☞ As a member of the textile art association Prism, Molly Williams regularly takes part in their annual show in London. For the event under the motto »Transient« that took place in the Hoxto Arches Gallery in London in 2018 she created her »Exploring the Senses« and »Life Dance« exhibits.

The Four Mollies

A few years ago, she was commissioned to make four life size figures, and this proved to be an ambitious and fascinating project, as she recalls. »The process of wire skeleton, wet felted musculature and skin was similar to the smaller figurines, however working with large quantities and multiple layers of wool was quite challenging and I had to use a sander and steamer to manage the felting!« Her client named the figures »The four Mollies« in her honor and now they stand in a gallery in her home.

Lino Cut on Felt

Molly Williams also experiments with lino cuts on felt, for example on a white felt bowl with printed-on figures or in connection with the image 'Digital Imprisonment'. This reflects on »how we are reduced to numbers in our digital world and question whether we have lost our unique identity.« Like felt there is an element of surprise with lino cuts. »You are never quite sure how it will turn out eventually!«

Working with Clay and Concrete

The English artist makes her figurative sculptures not only from wool but also clay and concrete. As she thinks »these materials work in a similar way to felting wool fibres in that they are very tactile, and the basic process is the same – wire skeleton and clay/concrete musculature. There are many options for a decorative skin – pebbles and beads, even felt. I prefer working with concrete, however, as it does not require firing and is weather-proof and I can create sculptures for the outdoors. «Four clay figures were presented at the Prism 'Fragility' exhibition in London and Birmingham in 2019.«

Design for Digital Prints

Next to making sculptures her ongoing research project is the costume, ceramics

and history of the Ottoman Empire. »As a child I lived in Istanbul with my parents. Memories of the treasures of the Topkapi palace still inspire my design work. I develop pattern designs for digitally printed fabrics that I make into wall-hangings and replica kaftans. Pattern designs can be printed onto a range of diverse contrasting materials - for example the acrylic chair and textile throw made for the Designer Craftsman exhibition at the William Morris Gallery 2012 but also on a silk wall-hanging or kaftan.«

☞ In 2021, Molly Williams will embark to something new. After 30 years in Sussex she will move to Shropshire together with her husband. »It is a very beautiful part of England.« She looks forward to taking long walks with her dogs. Also professionally there are new paths to be tried: She plans to study Contemporary Crafts at the Hereford School of Art in 2022. She wants to take her artwork on in another exciting direction, meet new people and find new challenges. Standstill is not for her: »I think one should always be searching, researching and developing new ideas and concepts.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 34-37

Simply Different

Sabine Köhlert's minimalist felt art is out of the ordinary.

A red dot is the signature symbol of Sabine Köhlert: You can find it in many of her works. But even without it one can immediately recognize her pure style without any unnecessary frills. »Minimalism, paired with clear structures and order – this is me!«, the artist presents herself and her artistic goals. ☞ She has been felting for more than twenty years. She loves to experiment and to try out new things. But she doesn't like the reproducing of other projects or to work alongside instructions. Even in her very early felting courses she always sought out her own way. »In the hat felting course everyone kept strictly to the models presented by the teacher, but I made a helmet instead«, she remembers.

Convincing Through Clarity

From 2014 to 2016 Sabine Köhlert successfully completed the education

program »Fit in Filz« at the Oberrot Felting School. Often, she became quite irritated with her fellow-participants. »So often they kept saying: ‚But this is nothing!‘ My objects were too simple for them, but they remain so despite that criticism. Now I can say with utmost conviction: They should be exactly that! My objects ought to persuade by their simplicity and purity, inviting the spectator to dwell on them.«

☞ The already mentioned red dot is supposed to lead the viewer's eye to a certain direction and to have her or him to grapple with the object itself.

A Political Statement

In the past two years, the artist has been dealing with the subjects »Ordering, adaptation and categorizing«. During that time, she completed the objects »aus dem Rahmen fallen« (to be off-beat) and »everyone matters?« that were also influenced by the anti-racism movement »Black Lives Matter«. »Everyone matters? Is not everybody important?«, she asks. »If you look closely at my work, you see a red and black channel among hundreds of white ones. The red one stands for me and the black one for the Black people in the US and around the world. Each and everybody is welcome to draw his or her own conclusions.«

☞ Usually, Sabine Köhlert teaches felting techniques as a lecturer in art classes or within the scope of art projects and working groups. The pandemic has halted all those activities for the time being. »But the Corona pandemic has opened up new free spaces for me as well«, the artist states. »I was able and still am to use the lockdown period to finish projects or to plan new ones.«

☞ Also exhibits and events that she wished to have taken part in were cancelled, postponed or only happened under strict rules – e.g. without a festive, convivial opening. So the international felt exhibit curated by the Filz-Netzwerk »(Ver)Kleidung« (approx. [Dis]Guise)s« could not be shown at all its designated locations. Sabine Köhlert also made her contribution with »big knot« made of cables sheathed in colored felt.

A Virtual Round in the Show

»Some events, though, took place under new conditions«, she reports. »The Kunststroom Wassenberg/Roerdalen« was made visible digitally. Usually, about 80 artists from The Netherlands, Germany and Belgium take part. This year, only 20 artists were chosen – and I was lucky to

be one of them. To find myself between the chosen painters and sculptors, to be able to show my own art there has greatly motivated me for the future.«

☞ In her concept of the future, she envisages many exhibits with artists from all genres, as she says. »Beware of a stand-still, keep going on«, is her motto. »Art means change, but not necessarily adaptation.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 38–41

Roses Are her Trademark

In the Swiss village Pfyn Erika Graf makes unusual felt fashion from wool and silk.

Whoever sees Erika Graf's exceptional creations will hardly believe that the Swiss artist has held a variety of jobs in her eventful life, but never studied Textile Design or went to fashion school. She has been a businesswoman, riding coach and host in a hotel. Today, »with over seventy«, she lives in a house shared by several generations together with her husband Hans, her daughter Patricia and her grandson Sebastian.

☞ The former veranda of her farm house was turned into a studio. »From my felting table I can see our two Freiberg horses«, she tells us with great enthusiasm. Sometimes the tomcat Cosi, »the youngest members of our menagerie«, keeps her company when she felts.

☞ Her first try at felting happened when her kids still went to nursery school: Then she made dwarfs and animal masks from wool. She continued to experiment further: »Most things came to me through learning by doing«, she says. Ten years ago, she took up the challenge of a more ambitious project, a grey jacket. She has been wearing it with great joy since then, »it is sustainable in a literal sense and environment-friendly.«

Cotton Gauze and Silk Organdy

Most of her designs are made in the Nuno felt technique. »As a carrier material for coats and jackets I use cotton gauze and for delicate tops, summer jackets and shawls silk or silk organdy – with a preference for a breath of Uzbek Magilan silk together with Merino pre-felt.«

☞ At the 17th Weave and Fiber Art Event in Rocco di Sala Baganza in Parma, Italy under the motto »Weiß trifft Gold« (White Meets Gold) the Swiss artist's contribution was a breathtaking ensemble of a gold silk skirt with a white felt grid over it that moves at the slightest breeze, and a waisted jacket with swinging peplums. »The big Queen Mary collar is felted onto a double layer of cotton gauze and fixed with corset stays«, she explains.

A Romantic Touch

This combination is a typical example of Graf's silk creations and those of other natural materials. They invariably have »a romantic and playful touch«, as she puts it. Her unique pieces – mostly jackets, coats, tops and shawls as well as bracelets and rings with rose decorations she makes to order and participates in Arts and Crafts shows in Switzerland and abroad.

☞ She develops the correct it after a basic pattern that is further enhanced by details like collars, decorations, precious hand-bobbed lace and eye-catching buttons. On many of her creations the rose motif calls to attention, as she confirms: »Felted roses are kind of my trademark, you will see them in all variations.« In order to give the blossoms their typical Vintage look she uses a trick: »I dye the silk with black tea, this gives the blossoms and buds a natural, slightly wilted look.« Another hallmark of her »Mumi-Filz-Werk-Unikate« (Mumi Felt Unique Pieces) are contrasting colors in jackets linings.

Like a Painting

»My finely felted garments are built up like a painting«, Erika Graf describes her way of working: »Onto the carrier material I put a layer of mostly monochrome, certified Merino wool as a basis. Then I apply the pattern onto it from mulberry or sari silk in vivid colors. Silk waste material renders beautiful, three-dimensional effects.«

☞ For a vintage dress that earned her a nomination to the Swiss Design Competition formforumMasterpiece in 2018 she chose a light, embroidered cotton fabric as a carrier material. »The upper part is layed underneath with white Merino wool, which is felted and merges into a cotton skirt«, she explains her design. »It goes with a vest with a rose pattern. The light top hat I formed around an old milk kettle.«

☞ Erika Graf finds her inspiration in

nature, during long walks with her dogs. »Often my ideas overwhelm me and lead to spontaneous designs«, she says. She does without any trial patterns, »there isn't even a pair of scales in my studio.«

Invitation to London

Due to the pandemic also Erika Graf has not been able to meet her plans. »I would so love to take part in fashion shows with my delicate creations«, she muses. »In this atmosphere there lies a unique, tangible excitement.« She keeps up selling tailor-made models to her clients and supports a number of felt enthusiasts in felting their own fabrics. But she dearly wishes to be finally able to attend exhibits and fairs in person again. She is invited to show her work in the Parallax Art Fair in der Kensington Town Hall in London in October, to which she already looks forward a lot.

»Felting is my passion«, she says. »Wool and its endless possibilities keep holding me in thrall.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 42–43

Solidarity and Confidence

The community work called »Tor der Hoffnung (Gate of Hope) is made from feltmakers' contributions.

The wall hanging that Sawatou Mouratidou, Barbara Füreder and Barbara Martin designed as a symbol of peace, friendship and optimism in the time of a pandemic looks like a door with a grey framework and 40 felted »glass« panels through which blue-filtered light seems to fall. It is made from felt squares made by artists from Germany, Austria and Switzerland.

Color of Desire

»In order to leave behind this helpless feeling a bit and to contribute in our way to social life« the Austrian artists' collective wollmodus had called to make square images measuring 10 cm x 10 cm in different shades and nuances of blue and to hand them in: »Blue is the color of the sky and the sea, of longing, of hope, of clear thoughts and persistence«, as quoted in the tender material.

»The feedback was overwhelming. »We were all very touched by it and the many kind words that reached us«, said the three organizers. From the felted squares they made a 165 cm x 76 cm wall hanging named »Gate of Hope«, with a door handle and three blue starfish at the upper edge.

Felt Work Raffle

Initially it was planned to sell the community art work at the fair »Kunst im Handwerk« (Art in Crafts) in Perchtoldsdorf in November to help textile artists in need during the pandemic, but the fair was cancelled because of the lockdown. The wollmodus-team decided to raffle off the wall hanging. The lots were offered for 10 Euros a piece. At the end stood the gain of 1520 € that were duly passed onto two artists in Austria and Germany.

»Erika Anger from Vienna is the happy winner of this impressive art piece.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 44–46

Faces of Extinction

UK-based artist Gladys Paulus launched a new art project earlier this year. Here she describes the aims of the project and explains how you can get involved.

»Faces of Extinction is an international community art project and on-line exhibition that aims to draw attention to the impact of human activity on eco systems and habitats, and the increased rate of species loss that is one of the results.

I invite you to become involved by making a mask of an animal species (or plant, or organism) threatened with extinction, and to submit a photo of yourself wearing the mask and bearing a fact sign. Taking part is an opportunity to start a conversation; with yourself, and those around you.

There is something powerful about putting on a mask and becoming a different being, even if just for a short while. I often witness the magic of this in my workshops: Students spend 5 days working intensely on a mask, and then at the end, when they try it on, something in them changes. Their body language, the way they walk,

move, stand. Often their voices change too. Sometimes these moments are just funny and lighthearted, at other times, they are unexpectedly moving and poignant. So, the thought started forming to bring more intentionality and purpose into the process and to put the imagery that comes out of it to better use. I know many people share my concern, horror and grief at the alarming increase in habitat loss and extinction rates that are happening as a result of human actions, as well as the enormous environmental challenges we are facing. With this project I am offering a creative platform to anyone who feels moved to express this concern, at the same time as providing a means to collectively raise our voices in a silent shout. By posing as half animal, half human, we acknowledge that we too, are a part of the natural world and that what we do to the natural world, we do to ourselves.

If you are reading this and something in you feels called to take part, then visit the International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)'s Red List of Endangered Species, select an animal you want to represent, and start planning your mask - even if you know you are not able to start making your mask straight away. You can search the website <https://www.iucnredlist.org/> by region, by habitat, by threat, etc.

It's wonderful to see some of my regular students taking part, but even if you haven't been to one of my mask making workshops, or feel intimidated by the idea of trying to figure out how to felt a mask, you still can join! Feel free to throw the rule book out of the window; cut and stitch a mask from a sheet of felt, work together with a friend, use a combination of textiles, or a different medium entirely! This project is open to creative folk working in all mediums, and you really don't have to be a professional artist to take part. You have creative licence to portrait and interpret the animal or organism's uniqueness in any way you see fit. The only restrictions are that the animal needs to be recognisable (though not necessarily realistic) and the mask needs to cover your head completely. So whatever your medium, be it textiles, paper maché, ceramics, metal, pen or paint on paper; please join in! To launch the project, Gladys made a Javan rhino, a reference to the country of her ancestors. The model in the mask is Toby Nowlan, a wildlife expert and assistant producer on wildlife documentaries such as the BBC's Planet

Earth II and Netflix's *Dancing with the Birds* who, at the start of this year, managed to track and capture film footage of this rare and illusive animal during a month-long expedition.

☞ *Faces of Extinction* occupies a dedicated Instagram and Facebook page. In order to present visual unity, and to maximize the impact of this art campaign, participants are asked to produce images to the same spec, so you are asked to follow the guidelines as closely as possible. The style of photographs used is based on police mug shots. What Gladys wants to portray with these images is the notion that these animals are being sentenced, and by default, we are too. »Time will tell how our actions now will be judged by our children's children.«

For more information and guidelines on how to take part, visit the Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/pg/Faces-of-Extinction-105666694326676> <https://www.instagram.com/facesofextinction/>

If you are not on social media but want to take part, you can email Gladys on info@gladyspaulus.co.uk with the subject header 'Faces of Extinction - how to take part guidelines'. Please note that Gladys is unable to give individual advice by email or phone on how to make your mask.

PAGES 47-49

Oh Help! Oh no! It's a Gruffalo!

Katrin Orrell revives the famous children's book creature in an elaborate costume

»It has terrible tusks and terrible claws and terrible teeth in his terrible jaws.« This is how the terrifying Gruffalo from the modern childrens' book classic by Julia Donaldson and Axel Scheffler is described by the little mouse. His congenial illustrations served as a model for an impressive Gruffalo costume that the felt artist and English teacher Katrin Orrell made during the pandemic. Here she tells us how it was made. During the Corona restrictions I took part in an online course of the Canadian Melissa Nasby that offered designing 'wearable art': Costumes, partially felted

or decorated with synthetic fur. Since I had still a lot of brown surface hair from Island Sheep left, I decided to give the Gruffalo a woolen fur instead of an artificial one.

A Fur from Iceland Sheep Wool

It took me some weekends to sew the Iceland sheep wool as a fur onto an old curtain. Because it soon became clear that I would need more wool, some members of a Facebook group chipped in and provided me with the necessary material, amongst others from Zackel and Skudde wool.

☞ Once the fur was finished, I set out to procure the other elements of his costume: a friend's discarded bike helmet, the inlay of an old mattress, discarded socks, gloves and a pair of trousers that had belonged to my husband- and, of course, more wool.

A Needle-Felted Face

The helmet serves to keep the costume securely on the head; from the foam material of the mattress, I built the Gruffalo's head. The helmet's visor was dismantled and glued on again in the different direction. So, the mouth opening came to pass. It simultaneously serves as a slit for the eyes - because after all it proved quite sensible to be able to see where to run. The socks for Gruffalo's feet, his gloves and the old pair of pants for his knotty knees were amply decorated with wool fibres. The helmet was covered with a previously made fur and the felt needle rendered the facial expression of the beast, including a green wool wart.

☞ The teeth, the horns, the back spikes and the claws I made from plastic, air-drying moulding mass. I painted them with acrylic colors and fixed them onto the customer with hot glue. For the shining black eyes I mixed Expositiv with acrylic color and the pupil was put on with a black marker. A first test showed great results. The unfettered mouse that is the true protagonist of this enchanting picture book I needle-felted with wool and further modelling details were also added on.

Idea of an Online Lecture

During the week-long making I kept showing the progress of the costume on my Facebook page. I noticed that many, but not all people knew the great story of the Gruffalo. A new idea entered my mind: Maybe I could read the book online and get a wider audience for that witty

tale?

☞ Thought and done. I contacted the publishing house in England and asked for permission to lecture on the book online in the English version, in co-operation with our small English department and my felt figurine studio. The publishing house agreed to a one-time, free-of-charge lecture, which was successfully realized on Halloween day 2020.

☞ Later, in the dusk, some families underway on their evening walk may have gotten goose-pimples, when I tapered along them through the village clad in in the Gruffalo costume to get to my aunt's house. Small wonder - you do not meet a creature »with knotty knees, terrifying paws and a venomous-looking wart in its face any old day.« It can be rather scary!

KATRIN ORRELL

PAGES 50-51

Strawberry Fur and Cheese Curls

Ina Jeromin's short film »Kleider machen Schafe« (Clothes Make the Sheep) wins a creative award.

A whole flock of sheep acts crazy: The animals feed on apple tree leaves and then - plopp, plopp - they magically metamorphose. One turns into a strawberry, another into Swiss cheese, others again change to a giraffe, a hog, a zebra or a snake - while always kind of maintaining a sheep's bodily form. But their changed physical forms threaten to disrupt the flock order, since every animal suddenly wishes to be someplace else, someplace way more interesting than the familiar, boring meadow on which they usually graze.

☞ Ina Jeromin from Freiberg in Saxonia made the story of this odd flock into a nine-minute animated film. The actors are hand-made sheep from wood and felt but also a live Skudde flock. Two ten year-old girls, Hannah Heinzig and Laura Beer, who are regular feltmaking guests at Jeromin's studio »Bunte Truhe« (Colorful Chest) lend them their voices.

Test Patterns as Pelt

With her video and the ensuing online-meeting around the subject the Saxonian

feltmaker won one of three creative awards at the occasion of the Short Film Day 2020. She decided on making the pelts out of test patterns for the cardboard- or wooden sheep for a reason: She had admired the many test pieces that were left by Heidi Greb during the Felt Encounter in Bad Schandau in 2019 and had deemed them way too precious to end up moth-eaten in some container. Thought and done. Jeronim presented more than 20 disguised sheep figurines at the international show »Ver(Kleidung« ([Dis]Guise). The pelts were made of all kind of wet- or needle-felted combinations that she embroidered, punched holes into or put together from various pre-felts. For a fuzzy Alpaka pelt she needled the ends of Alpaka fiber bushels onto pre-felt and gave it a wet-felting. To achieve the marked stripes of the Zebra she scorched the felt cautiously with a hot air device.

Filmed with the Smartphone

When a wildlife camera filmed the Skudde sheep belonging to a friend of hers, them trying hard to snack leaves and fruit of an apple tree the film's concept was born. »No more than a smartphone with a remote trigger and tripod was required from the technical side«, she tells us, »but we had to muster a lot of patience.« The proceeded as follows: She moved the sheep on strings or with her hands and recorded that so the threads or her hands remained invisible. In »Stop-Motion-Technique«, the figurines were shifted inch by inch and then photographed. When the recordings were put on fast forward, the illusion of movement was established. For the metamorphing scenes, Ina Jeronim felted additional white pelts for every sheep which were put on the colorful ones and taken away gradually in a serial of photos.

Lawn Trimmings with Nail Scissors

»The nine-minute film comprises 290 single files, whereby a serial for even a small movement consists of 20 or 30 single photos«, the filmmaker reports. »When I wanted to show the animals grazing, I had to trim pieces of the meadow with nail scissors. The neighbors were getting anxious and asked whether they should call a doctor, because they watched me spending so much time lying flat in the grass.«

Workshop in Soltau

Because she liked making the short film so much and she is convinced that felted figurines are ideal for such projects, Ina

Jeronim will offer a workshop at the Filzkolleg in Soltau mid of July 2021. She will not only convey the recording techniques but also the compilation and eventual try at cutting such a film on the computer. »Dwarfs could run through a felted landscape, flowers burst into bloom or ladybugs could crawl on the ground«, the artist suggests. »All I can say we will have a lot of fun.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGES 52-55

Tutorial: Meditation Cushion

A sun motif adorns the meditation cushion filled with spelt or buckwheat. It lends support and invites to rejoice in a couple of minutes' peace. Carola Zeiger shows us in a step-by-step instruction how the felt cover for such a cushion is made.

Material

For the Cover

- 100 g fine Merino fleece, crimson and bordeaux
- ∞ 100 g Merino roving, bordeaux
- ∞ 15 g pre-felt from wool and silk, red, for the front side Ø 42 cm
- ∞ 5 g pre-felt, grey, for the sun motif
- ∞ Wool thread for the edge
- ∞ A pair of zippers, length 35 cm
- ∞ A cushion Ø 42 cm, tightly stuffed with spelt or buckwheat (You could sew that yourself, see instructions online: kontakt@filz-fantasien.de)

Feltmaking Equipment

- Bubble foil for the resist and as a working pad
- ∞ Smooth foil for the pattern (alternatively bubble foil, it doesn't shift easily and is easier to recognize)
- ∞ Towel or a big piece of cloth for fulling
- ∞ Bowl, soap and gauze
- ∞ Fulling pin, a pair of scissors and a tape measure.

Note

Quality test samples for patterns are necessary and make sense. For this project, I was not inclined to do so, since I had made many material test patterns for my graduation piece. Due

to these experiences, I calculated the measurements and the amount of wool required for the cushion. If you don't feel too sure in this matter, my advice is to felt test pieces with your choice of wool in the designated layer thickness.

Instructions

1 The cushion should have a diameter of 42 cm (= finished size/FS), the shrinking factor (SF) is 1.6. Therefore, cut a round resist from bubble foil with a diameter of 67 cm.

2 Part the wool from the back side and the front side of the cushion as follows: 100 g of wool each (50 g fleece and 50 g roving) for each side as well as the 20 g pre-felt for the upper side.

3 For the back side pluck two layers of fleece (26 g each) or lay it out in a circle according to the size of the resist. (For my cushion I used two different shades of red. Of course, you can settle on a single one.)

4 Part the 50 g roving for one cushion side in half. Pluck the first 25 g evenly and lay it out in concentric circles from the middle to the outside on the already prepared fleece circle, so that it protrudes a bit over the resist's edges.

5 Lay out the second 25 g roving in rays from the edge to the middle. The wool in the middle should be laid out a bit thicker. On the edge, on a width of 3 cm somewhat less wool should be distributed, because the wool will be folded over the resist's edge. Otherwise, you get an ungainly bulge at the edges.

6 For the upper side with the second woolen portions of each 50 g fleece and roving repeat the steps 3 to 5. Put on the pre-felt with the sun motif. (If your pre-felt piece is big enough you can cut the circle entirely from it. Here I used several smaller pieces.)

7 Cut out the pieces for the sun motif from bubble foil and lay it out onto the pre-felt circle for test purposes, to control whether everything fits. Then remove the foils.

8 Wet the wool of the backside evenly with warm water and soap it. Only use as much water as the wool can soak up.

9 Place the circular resist. For different wool colors, make sure that the inside is facing up. Fold up the overhanging edges close to the resist. The fibers must be thoroughly wet, otherwise they cannot be folded over exactly.

10 Put the already prepared upper side onto it and take care that the edges match neatly. Start moistening the piece from the middle. Place the resist for the sun motif at the exact designated spot and take care that the intervals are even. Cover the motif with the red pre-felt in such a manner that the motif overlaps around it in exact and even portions.

11 Wet everything thoroughly and contour the red pre-felt circle with a woolen thread or a pre-felt strip for a finish.

12 Now fold the protruding edges of the upper side downwards. Don't turn around the work piece but flap the edges backwards instead and lay the woolen rims downwards across the edge.

13 Felt the front side lightly. Use hardly any pressure, otherwise the foil pieces for the sun motif will shift and would change the pattern. Once you notice that the first fibers of the pattern have combined you can felt more deftly towards the edge.

Take the surplus water away with the towel so that the work piece won't get too heavy when it is turned around. Also, the form might suffer. Then turn the piece around carefully and felt the back side: first the folded-over edges, so there will be no bulges and then continue towards the middle.

When the wool turns cool, dab off the surplus water with the towel, then add very warm water and continue felting. When both sides of the cover have been felted full it inside the towel, roll it for a while and at last throw it onto your working table.

14 When the cover has a diameter of 44 cm, i.e. two centimeters more than the designated fit, stop. Rinse the felt cover thoroughly with clean water and neutralize the last soapy patches with vinegar water.

15 Tumble-dry the cover or let it dry on a towel. Then cut the middle of the backside lengthwise 33 cm straight to fit the pair of zippers.

16 Now lay bare the sun motif: With a small, pointed pair of scissors cut the felt at the edge of the reserve. Then cut the pre-felt along the edge of the foil resists and remove those.

17 Now the grey sun motif comes into view. Take care to cut the reserved forms exactly and with care, so the motif appears clearly and cleanly.

18 Then felt the rims and the cutting edge slightly for the placing of the zippers. Now the end measure of 42 cm should be reached. Rinse the cover again thoroughly (with a shot of vinegar in the last rinse), tumble-dry it and pull it into form.

19 Put the cushion inside the cover for a test. Fit in the zippers in the slit on the back side.

20 Fasten the zippers in the slit with pins and baste it.

21 Then sew the zippers on with the sewing machine. I wish you many resourceful meditations!

CAROLA ZEIGER

A Firm Ground to Meditate on

Meditation does not happen without a certain grounding, let alone in a vacuum. It should have a solid base. To sit on this felted cushion securely supports me and offers contact to the earth. It is big enough to comfortably sit on. It supports and helps me to straighten up. It is firm, not hard, stuffed exactly right. I sit upright, neither bent nor limply. The woolen cover's thickness is perfect, and it warms me without ever feeling hot.

∞ The cushion is a unique piece showing a broken-up sun motif in several shades of red and grey. Red is for courage, power and warmth. Grey soothes. Where the cushion touches the ground, it is of a deep red. The stencil technique on the upper parts breaks up the background and lets the grey shine through a red sheen. The sun and its rays in the middle are grey – not red, as one would expect. A sun I can gaze at. The material, i.e. felted wool, the design and the fractured and see-through colors give balance and calm down without being only sleek and lacking in tension.

∞ I am turned towards the earth and the sky. The highest point of my head receives strength from above, down below

I am assisted by the cushion, which makes me a link between heaven and earth. I breathe, and the air sifts right through me. I am empty and full of emotions at the same time. When thoughts arise, I let them pass me by.

∞ I am neither detached nor glued to the ground. I have a firm base.

THOMAS KELLER

PAGES 56–59

Sheep & Wool: Forest Sheep

History and Origin

The Forest Sheep is a descendant of the already extinct Zaupel sheep. This used to be one of the most common sheep breeds in Southern Germany, Bohemia and Moravia (today Czechia) and was mostly kept in small flocks for self-sufficiency. When Merino and meat sheep rose in importance the breed was pushed back into the rougher regions. This sheep had to adapt itself to the farmers' fundamental needs, the Zaupel sheep (and for that matter, the Forest Sheep) was cross-bred rather arbitrarily; a fixed breeding aim was neglected.

∞ The Zaupel sheeps' descendants had no standardized denominations. At the end of the 19th century the term »Wäldlerschaf« (Sheep of Forest People) was first mentioned, but it possibly applied more to sheep of the Bavarian Forest. Following this term, the name Forest Sheep was later turned into a breeding category.

∞ The preservation breeding happened rather late with regard to the Forest Sheep. In the late 1980ies breeders started to look for the last living populations in Germany, Austria and Czechia and preservation finally started with approx. 100 animals. In-breeding soon became a problem since those animals obviously showed a great degree of mutual relatives. Only towards the end of the 1990ies the animals' origin was documented with the help of a special computerized program to avoid in-breeding by calculations and other measures. Since then, the populations in Germany and Austria have steadily risen in number.

∞ Because those sheep were 'only' meant for the self-sufficiency of their owners,

keeping them had to be plain and simple. The meat and the wool were used. In the old days, the female leader animal was pegged to a long chain and the remaining flock never ventured far from it. The further development of this breed turned out animals that were sturdy, uncomplicated, local and quite easy to handle.

Body and Wool

The Forest Sheep belongs to the small country sheep or to those of middle height. The rams weigh between 60 and 80 kg and have a withers' height of approx. 65 cm. The ewes are about 60 cm high; their weight varies between 40 and 55 kg.

~ Their heads are rather short, the forehead woolly and the small ears stick out straight at the sides. They have a long, woolly tail and they are said to be delicately limbed. The rams mostly have beautifully turned, snail shell-like horns. Those of the ewes, if at all existent, are much smaller and dainty, reminding of the horns of female Heidschnucke sheep.

~ The Forest Sheep's wool is characteristic for old country sheep breeds in that it is a mixture. It consists of two different kinds of kemp and fine wool fibers which form the greater part. Their wool is often white but there are brown, grey, black or pied pelts as well. In terms of its looks, the Forest Sheep is an atypical country sheep with many variations of size, wool and coloring.

~ Yasmin Gross

Wool Research and Felt Tests

Admittedly, the piece of brown Forest Sheep fleece in front of me makes a rather sturdy impression. It is also very dirty, so it won't lend itself to many ideas for a project. On the other hand, it is plainly visible that the Forest Sheep wool combines very different qualities of wool. The back part here is short-fibered, strongly out-bleached and shaggy, while at the small flank piece long hairs are found.

~ I was lucky to get my hands on a small amount of a very beautiful white specimen, which is a lot shorter but cleaner as well, so the wool can be judged a lot better. I have made my test pieces with both kinds, i.e. with long brown and short white wool.

~ Further into examining, both colors have marked fiber differences. One can clearly see the fine, crinkly wool hairs and the somewhat thicker, coarsely curled kemp. The latter are much shorter in the

white wool and cannot be separated from the hair. Also, the very short kemp are in plain view.

~ Since the brown wool is much longer, I set out to try to separate the single fibers. Soon I realize that also the longer hair can be categorized into different fiber types, but I did not go further into that. The different coloring of the various fiber types sticks out. The longer kemp kind shows a light beige, the wool hair fibers are brown and the short kemp is of a deep black.

Felt Trials

As usual, 10 g each and once 3 g of wool were laid out on a surface of 20 cm x 20 cm and shrunk till the end. With the long-haired brown wool, the test with 3 g only shows how it doesn't work. Given such a small layer I placed the wool in such a way that the felting underwool came to lie at the edges. In the middle there were only the long kemp hair that refused to felt down. So, it seemed that the test piece had hardly shrunk at all. In truth, however, it felted together only a little.

~ With the white wool it went much better. It shows that even at a small degree of thickness a beautiful felt results lest the irritating fibers are not too dominant.

~ I reached the following qualities:

Color and Initial Weight	Measurements	End Measurements	Shrinking Factor
Brown, 3 g	20 cm x 20 cm	-	-
Brown, 10 g	20 cm x 20 cm	13 cm x 13,5 cm	1.54
White, 3 g	20 cm x 20 cm	9 cm x 9,5 cm	2.01
White, 10 g	20 cm x 20 cm	13,5 cm x 13,5 cm	1.35

At last, I can say: Also Forest Sheep Wool is quite suitable for feltmaking. As it is so often the case, the supplier makes the difference in quality. The white wool felts wonderfully and yields a beautiful, even and solid felt that shows, to some extent, a closed surface. With the long brown wool, however the kemp irritates to such an extent that the felt is more or less open, knotty and doesn't seem to be resilient.

Conclusion

Generally, I am of the opinion that each kind of wool can be put to use for something. The wool of the Forest Sheep, though - even in good quality - will never become one of my favorites.

MARGIT RÖHM

Decoratively Quilted

The Mongolian Felt Blanket

In Altam Bulak Mari Nagy and István Vidák make the acquaintance of felt seamstresses and they learn why dogs have no business in felters' workshops. ~ Already upon arrival at Ulaanbaatar airport in Mongolia's capital we were inundated with images of Dschingis Khan: In the first Khan and founder of the Mongolian Empire in the 13th century, Mongolia, independent since 1991, has obviously found its hero and idol.

~ The city itself is a mixture of highly modern architecture and original villages with yurts that can be seen on the neighbouring hills. A visitor from abroad cannot fail to notice the many young families and their numerous offspring.

~ In a rented car we reached the village Altam Bulak after three hours, where we wanted to study Mongolian felt blankets.

~ Cendsuren Dalgor, a master of folk art, has already received many awards in her lifetime. The major part of her artistic work can be seen in the Prime Minister's palace, amongst others a yurt, the parts of which she made all by herself.

A Women's Association

»I was born here in the Altam Bulak village in 1951. I learned my feltmaking profession from my grandmother and mother«, Cendsuren Dalgor tells us. »Since I was 16, I had been a feltmaker, but my association has been existing only for the last 10 years. I founded it to support women who were left by their husbands and have to rear their children alone. Thirteen of us work together in winter and summer. I collect the orders, manage the financial matters and pay their wages.«

Great Care and Strong Fingers

We were allowed to look around the workshops where everybody was busy quilting the finished felt pieces. The tools used for

it are a woolen thread, the sewing needle, a leather thimble, a pair of big and a pair of small scissors and a plier. The sewing calls for great care and strong fingers, without the leather thimble it would be impossible to work for long.

☞ The quilting follows a Z-shape and is done from left to right. * From the upper side of the felt they stitch in a slant to the lower right. On the underside one stitches a short distance left from where the needle came out again and repeats this process. * (see the chart) For a quilt blanket in good quality the thread must be pulled tight.

☞ »We will need new felt plates only in September«, Cendsuren Dalor says animatedly. »The feltmaking lasts from morning till evening. Many of us gather, it is a very festive event.«

Beware of the Dogs!

Dogs are not welcome during feltmaking, she says. »The old men urged caution: While the wool is layed out and when the felt is rolled up no dog should be present. It would tear out a piece or pee on it. Also drunkards have to keep out of the way. When one showed up we rolled him up in the moist felt and rolled him around a couple of times until the warm steam sobered him. We laughed at him when he ran away. No drunkard dares to come near for he is certain what awaits him once he does.«

☞ Later, when we sat in the car from Altam Bulak to Ulaanbaatar our thoughts still lingered with this strange story that Cendsuren Dalgor had told us. No dog present when felting, why? We were reminded of an ancient fairytale:

☞ Once there was a rich family. They had as many sheep as there were stars in the sky. On a cold winter's day, a snow storm raged, the sheep dispersed and had soon vanished altogether. Then a wanderer who understood the language of the animals came to the family home.

☞ The shepherd told him how unhappy he was because the loss of his flock. Then the shepherd's dog said to the wanderer: »I will tell you where the lost sheep are. My master does not understand our language.« So the wanderer brought the flock home.

☞ When the shepherd saw this, he was very happy. He asked the stranger what he would like for his efforts. While the shepherd talked, the wanderer heard one sheep saying: »The strength of a thousand sheep burdens my shoulders, I cannot get astray from the flock.« Thus the wanderer. »I want to have this very

sheep.« The shepherd was quite willing to comply, but then the dog jumped onto the sheep. He wanted to keep it so the flock wouldn't lose its strength in number. When the wanderer noticed that the dog had torn out a bushel of hair from the sheep's pelt at the tail, he thought twice and asked to have the dog instead of it.

☞ »You have not received the strength of the flock, it was me who kept it for my master«, the dog said and urinated onto the felt that covered the yurt's side.

The wanderer addressed the shepherd: »I don't need your dog, but give me the felt that covers this side of your yurt.« The shepherd agreed. He took off the blanket, cleaned it and handed it to the wanderer.

☞ When the dog heard this, he said triumphantly to the wanderer, who understood the animal language: »You weren't lucky, but take the felt blanket with you!«

☞ Even today the Mongolians tear off a bushel of pelt from the tail of sheep about to be sold. They wipe the animal's nose with it and tie the bushel to the storm rope of the yurt. So, the power of the sheep's pelt and of the whole flock is preserved.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

PAGES 62–63

White Motifs on a Blue Background

Mari Nagy und István Vidák describe the technique of the traditional blue printing and dyeing

The blueprint is a process technology to pattern and dye cotton or linen that has been introduced to Europe more than 300 years ago. Since 2018 it belongs to the immaterial cultural heritage of mankind. The pattern is printed on a white fabric by means of models and a special reserve paste, the so-called Papp. Then the fabric goes into a blue dye lot. On the reserved areas the pattern remains white.

☞ Even today many blueprint workshops exist in Germany, Austria, Hungary, Czechia and Slovakia, and they each guard the ingredients of their Papp like a secret.

☞ We describe the technique step-by-step here below:

1 The fabric to be printed on is pure cotton, which our blueprint master Zoltán Bakos from Bácsalmás has boiled and ironed out. The seamstress Ágnes Hajdú has sewed small pouches out of it.

2 We stick a fitting felted rectangle into the pouch. We cover the working table with a felt plate to make the surface softer and more elastic and then we put some old fabric onto it.

3 Creating the motifs is called »discharging«. We use these four Indian wood models.

4 As a »stamp pad« we use a wooden frame that is layed out with waxed fabric – the straightening board. The so-called Papp, the resist paste, consists of clay, water, arabic gum, metal salts and some goose fat. The exact mixture is always a workshop secret. With a brush we distribute the Papp evenly and thinly on the straightening board.

5 We press the model on the pad twice. The motif is now covered in Papp.

6 Then we press the model on a piece of waste cotton for testing. We put the model once or twice onto the Papp again and stamp onto the piece of cotton. The third and fourth prints turn out already even and beautiful.

7 Now we can print onto the pouches: Take up Papp from the stamp pad, set the wooden printing block onto the desired place and knock lightly on it. Then lift the block off cautiously by tilting it sideways.

8 ☞ With the other printing blocks, we do the same: make some test prints on a piece of waste fabric, then print on the pouch.

9 Before the dyeing starts, the ready-printed front side of the pouch looks like that. We let the pouch dry for at least 10 minutes, then we stamp the backside and let it dry as well. The motifs reserved with Papp remain white during the dyeing process.

10 The stamping is finished. We weight the pouches with some pebbles and fix them to a stick or a willow branch with safety pins and threads.

11 In this barrel we have prepared the Indigo vat from clean rain water, concentrated Indigo (root vat), a bit of chalk and iron sulfate. The yellow-greenish liquid is alkaline (11-12 pH).

12 We push aside the foam of concentrated Indigo with a wooden shovel.

13 We lower the pouches slowly into the vat where they remain for 15 minutes.³

14 When pulling them out, a small miracle happens: At first, the cotton is like the vat's content, greenish-yellow. Only when it gets into contact with air it turns blue.

15 The dyed pouches are left to dry for 15 minutes.

16 Then we repeat the dyeing and drying three times in order to deepen the color.

17 The the dyed pouches are put into a kettle containing a mixture of rain water and vinegar. In this we rub the fabric to loosen the Papp. Then you see the white reserved pattern.

18 Once the Papp is out we wash the pouches first by rubbing them with soap. Then we rinse each under running water and let it dry.

19 On the blue ground beautiful white patterns are now visible.

20 Through the tunnel at the upper edge of the pouch we draw a cord, either store-bought or twisted by hand. Its ends are decorated with a glass bead and then knotted.

MARI NAGY AND ISTVÁN VIDÁK

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