

filzfun – The English Supplement

Issue #64

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Dear Readers,

it is now 40 years ago that the ancient handicraft feltmaking was re-discovered in Western Europe. A great part of this renaissance is clearly the merit of Mari Nagy und István Vidák from Hungary with their meticulous research and hosting of feltmaking camps. This year, the two pioneers held a jubilee celebration show in Budapest where many of their international companions over the last decades showed their art. As of page 14 we report from this awesome event. On pages 64/65 István Vidák again shares his research work with us; this time presenting a traditional felt cap from the Georgian Republic. The many ways in which feltmaking can be used or combined with other materials were amply proved by a number of exhibits on the island Rügen, in Gladbeck, the Austrian Wachau area, Switzerland, Belgium or at the Feltrosa in Tuscany, but also in countless courses and workshops which were held all over the land. Three of them will be presented in detail in this issue: Silke Sordyl, who lives in Illinois, demonstrated in Burgthann near Nürnberg and in Hamm how she needle-felts her enchanting figurine heads (as of page 24). In Sabine Reichert-Kassube's course with Elvira Altdorf near Aachen perfectly fitting, individual and above all streetworthy felt boots were made, and Gladys Paulus' students in Oberrot made skillful human masks. In case you want to discover something new in a course after reading our fall issue, please have a look at our schedule – in print or online: You can choose

from a wealth of workshops here and abroad. Susanne Schächter-Heil is always on the road to the next feltmakers' event. The chairperson of the German Filz-Netzwerk is strongly committed to making felting better-known to the general public or to the notion that children should already be acquainted with the craft at an early age. She argues for standards for felt quality. Her considerable experience was compiled in a book that was published only recently. Read more of this worthy »felt ambassador« and an excerpt from her book as of page 34. Beate Bossert is closely connected with the filzfun, it was she who founded the magazine under its former title »verFilzt Und zugeNäht« in 1999. In this issue she shares a step-by-step instruction how to make whirling wind chimes (as of page 58). Maybe this lovely project inspires you to have chimes dancing in the autumn wind soon as well. We wish you a lot of fun!

*With our best wishes,
Your filzfun-team*

Your direct contact to the editorial department:
redaktion@filzfun.de
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Water and Wool

Water as central element and living environment, but also as a crucial agent in the felting process has inspired the artists Annette Quentin-Stoll from Germany and Carine Mertes from Luxembourg to curate a joint exhibit titled »Waasser (Wasser)«. The objects and images, complimented by photographs and short films by Robert Quentin, can be seen in the Nature Reserve Center Esch-Sauer in Luxembourg from Nov. 17th to March 15th 2020.

www.naturpark-sure.lu

Graduates Exhibit

With a final show of the graduate works and a textile market, the Viltacademie in Essen/Belgium is going to celebrate the graduation of the third student group who will end their three-year training in the fall on Sunday, November 3rd 2019. As a special farewell gift, two internationally well-known felt artists host workshops during this textile event: Judit Pocs »Täschchen« (»Little bags«) and Brigitte Eertink »Kleine Schätze« (»Small Treasures«).

∞ On Nov. 25th 2019 the next group will begin their feltmakers' training which comprises six five-day modules with different key aspects each over the course of three years. Please find more detailed information on the internet.

www.viltacademie.be

Felt Galore

The Kunstverein Weiden presents felt art objects by Maria Weber, Barbara Eichhorn and Barbara Westerath under the motto »In Hülle und Fülle (approx. Galore)« in its premises in the Lederer Straße 6, 92637 Weiden from vom October 11th to November 10th 2019. The exhibit is complemented by a generous all-round workshop offer for both children and adults.

www.kunstvereinweiden.de

Biennial in Rijswijk

In the scope of the 6th textile biennial the Museum Rijswijk in the south of The Netherlands will show objects by 22 textile artists, amongst them Kata Unger

(»The Forecasters«, and Monika Supé from Germany. A catalogue is available. www.museumrijswijk.nl)

Madrid Turns into the Center of Textile Art

From September 17th to November 3rd 2019 Madrid will be the stage for the 8th biennial of contemporary textile art under the motto »The Sustainable City«. You can visit many exhibitions at various locales, at the same time there will be numerous workshops by well-known instructors from all over the world plus lectures by international contributors. Amongst others, Beatriz Schaaf-Giesser will supervise a course about the felting of small sculptures. Please find the whole program on the website of the World Textile Art Organization (WTA): <https://madrid2019.wta-online.org>

Felting Again in Vienna!

Contributors from six nations participate in the 4th Vienna Filzfestwoche in the Alte Schieberkammer in the 15th Viennese borough from October 8th to 13th 2019. All guests are invited to felt together at the occasion of the opening night on Tuesday, October 8th 2019 as of 7 p.m. During the following days - next to the show and a market - many workshops are scheduled, e.g. with Ursula Weber-Hejtmanek, Susanne Schächter-Heil of the German Filz-Netzwerk, Tanja Kahl, Beate Bossert, Martina Wahl and Helga Steegborn. For more information please contact Ursula Weber-Hejtmanek per mail. waam@gmx.net

Felting Masterclass at Crete

Felting and relaxing near the Mediterranean Sea - that's what Kerstin Scherr offers in two workshops at Kalamaki/Crete from May 8th to 15th and from May 15th to 22nd, 2020. During four days she supports people working on their own felting projects considering their individual experience. On Wednesday an all-day excursion is scheduled. www.trollino.de

Dreams Made from Silk and Wool

During the fourth feltmakers' meeting in the border region ponchos and jackets were made under Kerstin Scherr's guidance.

After several bigger symposia the fourth feltmakers' meeting in the border region took place - at a smaller scale - at an unusual locale: The feltmakers from Austria, Germany and Switzerland were guests at the club house of the Krippenverein (Nativity Scene Association) Lustenau.

Seamless Jackets

Under the guidance of Kerstin Scherr most of the participants felted seamless jackets and vario ponchos from fine wool in combination with Pongé and Margilan silk. The ponchos could also be worn as shawls. Since a thin wool layer was put in between two layers of silk, the resulting wearables were wonderfully light and softly flowing. All could be reversed and thus worn on both sides. (In the Filzfun Special Nr. 5 which will appear at the end of October Kerstin Scherr will share step-by-step instructions how to make a so-called vario poncho).

Patchwork Puzzle

Some feltmakers worked in reserve or patchwork technique, where many different fabrics are put, like in a puzzle, next to each other with a little space in between. »This space can be left free or filled out with different materials, such as Sari or Tussah silk or knitting yarn«, Kerstin Scherr explains. »Because the fabrics don't overlap the wool gets through fine, creating fantastic structures and patterns.« The students were as riveted by the possibilities of this technique as they were relieved to be rid of the unloved basting.

∞ Next to felting together enough time remained to freshen up old felting friendships and make new ones, to exchange experiences and to celebrate the birthday of Ursula Weber-Hejtmanek, the organizer of the Vienna Filzfestwoche. At a Käsknöpfe blowout (Dish of handmade short noodles, melted cheese and onions) hosted by Marisa Dobler from the organizing company Wizardwool, some enthusiasts had the special cheese mix sent to their homes in order to shorten the waiting time until the next,

bigger feltmakers' meeting in the border region. (See info box)

HELENE WEINOLD

5th Feltmakers' Meeting 2020 in the Border Region

For next year, a bigger feltmakers' meeting is planned again in the border region. It will take place at the Bildungshaus St. Arbogast in Götzis from April 30th to May 3rd 2020. As instructors you will meet Beate Bossert, Constanze Krög and Susanne Wetzol. Please find more information in the coming weeks on the organizers' web site:

www.wizardwool.at

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Feltrosa's Many Faces

The name of the Italian convention is clear: Feltrosa deals with felt, since 2006. Every year in a different place and with different partners. We are guests of museums, associations or cities with a close connection with wool, crafts and textiles.

Between ten and fourteen May 2019 Feltrosa was held in Pratovecchio-Stia, at the Museum of the Art of Wool. All courses were booked since months. The community of people following the Convention, in Italy and abroad, anxiously awaited the opening of the inscriptions. In less than twenty-four hours the most popular courses were sold out.

~ Olga Anthrope, tireless organizer of everything deals with feltmaking in her studio Shkatulochka, advised me to invite Maria Gladchenko to lead two masterclasses on Nunofelt. It could not be a better choice: She's very talented and gentle, and has had attentions and advice for all, with great professionalism and generosity. The work created during the courses are original and very well made: a good teacher is evaluated by the quality of the work done by the students! During the summer 2018 I had circulated a survey to know from the participants what could meet their interest. The opinions were different, but some ideas proved to be very promising. So, I invited Ariane Mariane, a very original Feltmaker based in Paris and Yeshim Aykin, a Turkish expert in printing and natural dyeing.

~ In 2012 Feltrosa had organized an Ecoprint course of great success, the tutor was a reserved Irit Dulman, probably at the first experience of teaching internationally. In the following years, the English expert Jane Callender and Argentine Luciana Marrone were invited to hold courses on the use of indigo in Shibori and in dyeing with cochineal. And in more recent years, courses in EcoPrint, so that a community of experienced and passionate began to attend regularly the felters meeting! With Yeshim, a delightful and very elegant person, we printed on leather and, in another course, extracted the vegetal colors to be used to print cotton fabrics.

~ Needle felt is a special technique that also has a passionate community of follower, so was invited Gioconda Pieracci, known as Pupillae, the most sensitive and experienced Italian specialist in the creation of artistic dolls. Ten silent and focused people enrolled in the course producing a naughty Pinocchio, fairies, and even Pippi Longstocking.

~ Feltrosa hosted also a weaving and an embroidery course, covering all fiber arts. The little time left between one course and the other was dedicated to the exploration of the artistic and scenic beauties of Casentino, the valley east of Florence where Pratovecchio-Stia is located.

~ Two exhibitions have shown felt sculptures and works brought by the participants. Saturday evening a concert in the dark has offered all participants a very different attention to sensory experiences.

~ Next edition will take place close to Parma, on May 8 to 12, 2020: you are all invited!

EVA BASILE
www.feltrosa.com

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Homage to Transience

The Filzkollektiv has a year-long exhibition in the park of Castle Pansevitz on the island Rügen

Please allow me to present our Filzkollektiv (Felting Collective)! We are Evelyne Carcaterra, Verena Frei, Jana von Janso, Melanie Mesli, Karin Müller, Anne

Rau, Alexandra Schmidt, Anne Weinkauff-Esser, Monika Willmes and the honorary member Lyda Rump.

~ Already from the beginning of our training in 2016, our felting student group was in harmony, and we always had lots of fun when we met at Wollknoll. But also between the educational terms we kept in contact and exchanged our thoughts and plans. Even then we planned to continue meeting for communal feltmaking. At the final exhibit at Oberrot in July 2018 there were fantastic news for us from our fellow student Monika Willmes who lives on Rügen. She had inquired at the Schloßpark Pansevitz foundation (near Gingst on Rügen) whether we could organize a felting exhibition in the burial grove, and our bid was accepted! Together we decided on the title of the exhibit »Vergänglich – lebendig« (transient – alive). We thought ourselves lucky that Lyda Rump agreed on counselling us as an art director, to offer practical support and to contribute some of her works to the exhibition frame.

One Whole Year With the Elements

The initial plan was to exhibit our felted objects in the castle park Pansevitz for approx. three months. But Dr. Helmut Straßer, the chair of the castle park foundation, suggested to leave it there for a whole year. How the objects would change under the influence of the elements like weather, but also of birds, insects or the visitors themselves was to be accompanied by the photographer Iwona Knorr. Her images would become part of the published catalogue. We agreed heartily!

~ During the five months until we would meet again for a feltmaking week in Oberrot we started on a »travelling feltwork«. Between February and the opening in July we made – apart from the »travelling feltwork« 14 other art objects, amongst others the communal projects »Perspektive (Perspective)« and »Steine (Stones)«. Every one of us handled the subject matter »transient-alive« individually and with great dedication.

Network and Bird Skyscraper

In her object »Was bleibt (What Remains)« Evelyne Carcaterra asks herself what is really important in life and what she will pass on eventually.

~ Verena Frei »Netzwerk (Network)« is delicate and sturdy at the same time, both vulnerable and perishable. It reminds us never to give up and to make fresh starts

all over again, just as the garden spider does it by tirelessly weaving its orb.

☞ »Vogelhochhaus« (Bird Skyscraper) made by Jana von Janso with its 40 felted balls put together in the shape of a double cone should appeal to our consciousness with regard to the vulnerability of nature and offer a home to its winged inhabitants.

☞ The »Drei Fahnen (Three Flags)« made by Melanie Mesli show a tree of life and family units, out of which central parts were cut and placed on the earth, where they become part of the forestal biosphere, while the flags have to brave the elements in a somewhat weaker fashion.

☞ Karin Müller's object »Erlösung (Deliverance)« deals with the question who or what shall be delivered. While the physical body turns to dust, soul and mind are released and float away without getting lost.

☞ The motto »vergänglich – lebendig« induced Anne Rau to remodel items of everyday use in order to emphasize their meaning. »Fünf Steine (Five Stones)«, »Eine Tür (One Door)« and a bench titled »Besinnung (Reflection)« speak for themselves.

A Secure Place

With her ten »Seelennester (Soul Nests)« Alexandra Schmidt wanted to offer a safe and secure place where we can rest after death. In another hanging object consisting of more than 200 felted discs she describes »Leben (Life)« in all its different stages. With her »Glückssträhnen (Lucky Streaks)« Anne Weinkauff-Esser reminds us of the words of the Dalai Lama: »I think that the meaning of life is to be happy.« The »Füllhorn (Cornucopia)« made by Monika Willmes pours out its gifts over the course of life. Nothing should be lost; this is why a golden vessel stands at the end of life's trajectory.

☞ As the German proverb goes: »The last shirt has no pockets«, meaning you should not be stingy but generous. Lyda Rump wants to convey just that, shifting the focus from consumerism back to the essentials of life.

☞ While the felted objects in the Schlosspark Pansewitz can be seen until June 2020, the Filzkollektiv is planning another exhibit, this time in Southern Germany, at the Villa Urbana in Heitersheim.

MELANIE MESLI

The exhibit »vergänglich – lebendig« can be seen until June 2nd 2020 in the Schlosspark Pansewitz on the island of Rügen. Visitors get a layout plan with the position of the various objects. They are invited to leave comments concerning their impressions and to put them in box when the round trip is completed. These will be used later in the catalogue.

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A Sojourn in Hungary – or Was I on »Planet Felt«?

To mark the 40th anniversary of the modern art of felting, an excellent jubilee exhibition »From Orient to Occident«, conceived by Mari Nagy and István Vidák, opened on 5 June 2019 in the beautiful Pesti Vigadó building in Budapest, Hungary. A total of 50 feltmakers from 10 countries, including 33 from Hungary, were invited to present their works. The exhibition shows a very wide range of felt objects in three large halls.

☞ In the first hall are hung large wall objects, works by felt artists from the early days of the new felt era, such as Gunilla Paetau Sjöberg, Sweden and Katharina Thomas, Germany. 40 white flags specially designed by the participants, adorn the high-vaulted ceiling of a central room in the second hall. The flags symbolize the bond of feltmakers worldwide throughout these years of rediscovering the art of felt, true to the words of Inge Evers from 1984 »Felt the World Together«. A number of two- and three-dimensional objects are also exhibited in this hall, as are the two large round rugs by Mari Nagy and Istvan Vidak which adorn the cover of the 76-page exhibition catalogue. The third hall houses a tremendous variety and range of clothing, accessories and carpets. Here also are lovingly presented a large selection of three-dimensional game objects.

☞ The exhibition opened with traditional music and greetings by Fekete György, Honorary Chairman and Vashegy György, President of the Hungarian Academy of Arts, and Johanna Rösti, Chairperson of the International Feltmakers Association. Csaji Laszlo Koppány, who wrote the

foreword to the exhibition catalogue, also gave a lecture.

☞ Following the opening of the exhibition, the 2-day anniversary conference began. An international group travelled to the Puszta, not to a camp as in the past, but to the Varga Tanya Hotel with affiliated spa. The vastness of the landscape, the sweeping horns of the cows, the horse-drawn carriages, thatched roof houses, hospitable people and fine food generated holiday feelings. Memories were exchanged and the participants shared their experiences of the development of felt-crafting and felt-art over the last 40 years. At that time, felting was known only to a very small circle of insiders, but thanks to the tireless efforts of Mari and Istvan and many other feltmakers and organizations, such as the IFA, and in recent years thanks to the Internet, felting has become widespread around the world and adapted to modern times.

☞ On the initiative of Mari Nagy, the participants started the application to recognize the felt craft and art with its millennium old history as an intangible UNESCO World Heritage.

☞ A visit to the rich collection of felt by Mari Nagy and Istvan Vidak, a visit to the Toy Museum where many felt events took place, and a studio visit to Judith Toth-Pocs in Kecskemet enriched these days around felt culture from all over the world.

JOHANNA RÖSTI

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Thought-Provoking Textile Incentives

The group TAFch showed their objects in the Altstadthalle in Zug, Switzerland.

In the middle of the old quarters of Zug, directly at the lake, is the Old City Hall, built in 1427. It is well-known as the locality of the Textismus shows. The four organizers of this extensive Swiss triennial – at present Bea Bernasconi, Grietje van der Veen, Ursula Suter, Christine Läubli – form the group Textile Art Forum Schweiz, in short TAFch.

☞ On the ground floor a powerful, felted image called »Water Belongs to Everybody« by Ursula Suter caught everybody's eye, too. Silver white shines in deep dark blue. Maybe these are

moonbeams on a river or a silent lake? Also in the upper rooms her big size objects show great felt art with delicate structures, in unexpected softness and a strong, meditative aura.

A Carpet Made of Wool Balls

In the narrow, high image called »es fließt« (it flows) a light path meanders through dark, olive green: A brook half-hidden by mosses? A piece of the sky between summer leaves? Wind in high grass? The carpet »Steine« (Stones) is impressive as well, it looks as if a Zen master had just raked his stone garden. Bea Bernasconi has been dealing with Graffiti for quite some time. Her fresh, colorful, expressive images catch the eye. She treats fabrics with different, often experimental processes, uses paper in all areas and makes collages out of these components. Often she creates from her personal experiences or impressions, like the encounter with an immigrant woman from Eritrea in the face image »Wanawake« and in the work series »Faces«.

An Image per Week

After a stressful year that Bea Bernasconi dedicated to her ill mother she sought a way back into art with her 2018 project »52 weeks«. During the whole year she sewed a miniature image by hand every week. They had to be made from waste fabric and threads in just three colors, according to her own rule.

» Grietje van der Veen has been trying to use up her fabric stores. She doesn't flinch from cutting up older works to make new ones. This results in meditative miniatures that she framed in old CD covers. In one series Grietje van der Veen handles man's treatment of his environment. Cleared rain forests, abandoned mines, nuclear waste – seen from afar the images seem aesthetic and harmonious, only when you get closer you catch up on the disturbing depth of the subject matter.

» I had studied lettering, layers and books intensively over the past couple of years. I wove diffuse written images into linen, then I drew other writing images onto it, put on printed letter and at last I projected some digital characters onto »Palimpsest«. It shows, on four rows of fabric arranged one after the other how in the course of human history new techniques superseded old ones without fully supplanting them. Seven silk gauze panels were also hung up in layers

where I had put signs resembling a kind of lettering in a darning stitch. Behind each layer shimmered another one.

» The show »TAFch stellt aus« (TAFch exhibits) clearly satisfied the public interest. Interesting discussions ensued, the audience was quite touched and seemed to lend itself to genuine reflection – last not least with regard to the significance of textile art.

CHRISTINE LÄUBLI

PAGE 18-19

Cage or Castle in the Air

Felt art exhibit »be-wohnen (dwelling)« by the Swiss feltmakers' scene at Greifensee castle.

For one weekend, the Greifensee castle in the Swiss canton Zürich was the meeting place of many felt enthusiasts from Switzerland and some from neighboring countries. The Filzszene Schweiz (Felting Scene Switzerland) association had invited to a members' show. 25 feltmakers contributed up to three felted objects for the presentation of the Swiss felt craft.

» The associates had prompted the exhibition themselves, and during a general meeting in 2018 they agreed on the motto »be-wohnen« (dwelling).

Surprising Illuminating Objects

The feltmakers dealt individually with the theme. Interior decoration objects from wall hangings to surprising illuminating objects, various sitting furniture was on show, but also objects that offered a critical view on dwelling per se. They ranged from living in a cage, believing yourself in never-never land, but also searching for a place called home in opposition to just »living somewhere«. Many animal fellow-dwellers found their way into the show from the felting table and reminded us that not only the human species needs a place to live.

» The quality of the exhibits was astounding. Despite the fact that there weren't any jurors and invitation for tender did only apply to the members themselves it became obvious how versatile and ambitious the art objects were. So the exhibit, the first one of its

kind, served as a platform for networking among the association members, who come from all over German-speaking Switzerland. In 2002 the association was founded under the name Filzszene Graubünden and re-named Filzszene Schweiz in 2016, but it had long been open to feltmakers from the rest of Switzerland.

One-year Training

The visitors streamed to Schloss Greifensee on both exhibition days, the locale turned out to be ideal for the purpose. The audience did not only comprise feltmakers from near and afar but also many people hitherto more or less unfamiliar with the felting craft. It was also a good occasion to publicly advertise training offers, i.e. a one-year felting training by the Filzszene.

» Many enthusiastic comments proved to the organizers that it had been worthwhile for a small association to shoulder the burden of such a show.

STEFANIE HOFMANN

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Consolidation on Many Levels

Five artists put up a show in the Alte Spedition in German Gladbeck.

»Verdichtung« (consolidation, densification) was the title of an exhibition at the Alte Spedition in Gladbeck. The motto lent itself to many exciting interpretations that were presented in many different ways. For one, consolidation was considered materially. The many different working materials that the five artists from Germany and Switzerland used was ample proof in itself: Among other materials, felt, copper wire, basalt, paper and surgical sewing material. Also »consolidated« feelings were addressed, like for example family nuclei, a place called home, differentiation or the air one breathes.

» Besides Andrea Behn, Gisela Jäckle and Sibylle Möndel two renowned felt artists were part of the quintet, Beatrix Schaaf-Giesser and Esther Weber.

Crocheted Lungs

The show was a co-operation by the curators Karoline Dumpe (Alte Spedition,

Gladbeck), und Beatrix Schaaf-Giesser (werk4art, Winnenden). Not only wool was in focus but alternative materials, like in an object called »Das Offensichtliche und das Verborgene« (The Obvious and the Hidden) depicted big, crocheted lungs. The two hanging elements looked like sponges from a distance, one can walk around in this installation. The view from the inside offered quite unusual and fitting perspectives to the other artworks on show.

∞ Beatrix Schaaf-Giesser chose with Esther Weber another internationally well-known felt artist for the co-operation. Esther Weber succeeded in a delicate and noble way to present wool and felt conventionally. Especially a nine-part ensemble caught the eye of the spectators, leading to the discovery of ever new and different details. The dull wool, in part spiked by glittering materials is felted in various, intricate techniques. Here it turns into a kind of being, seemingly sheltered in small black bowls with just a hue of shine, building up contrast.

Shelter and Differentiation

Also Esther Weber's piece »Erwartung (Expectation)«, a big, freely hanging cocoon with an opening, protuberances and indentations invites many interpretations of the subject »Consolidation« and simultaneously symbolizes protection and boundary. Caroline Dumpe and Beatrix Schaaf-Giesser succeeded to make a show full of harmony and opposites that matured into reflections and opened up discussion.

SILKE KOCH

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A Dialogue Between Two Artists

An artistic dialogue between Barbara Füreder und Angelika Hofmeister in the Wachau region in Lower Austria.

“ *It doesn't interest me how old you are. I want to know if you will risk looking like a fool for love for your dream for the adventure of being alive.*
Oriah Mountain Dreamer

Inspired and connected by the poem »Invitation« by Oriah Mountain Dreamer the two artists from Lower Austria, Angelika Hofmeister and Barbara Füreder immersed themselves in a 18 months long artistic dialogue that led to an exhibition lasting several weeks in the Teisenhoferhof in Weißenkirchen in the Wachau. They carried the poem to their studios in Muckendorf and Langenzersdorf and followed it step for step, line for line, in their personal efforts. First each one alone and later together they expanded and designed their art which ensued in a mutual dialogue beyond the usual limitations of artistic genres.

∞ The starting point of this personally and artistically deep encounter was their common passion of sculptural experiments reaching far beyond common basic working materials. Initially they both came from painting, but in the course of their creative work both artists perfected their art with graphic reproduction, collage techniques and object art featuring objets trouvés. While Angelika Hofmeister researched and developed the tradition of wax painting further on her personal path, Barbara Füreder linked the possibilities of photography more and more with those of painting.

A Love for Wool

Moreover, the two found each other mainly for their mutual love for artistic-experimental work with sheep wool and textile components. Over the years, each learned about the possibilities and subtleties of sheep wool and felting while gradually leaving the two-dimensional sphere in the direction of object-like felted images and textile sculptures.

∞ As it was a plainly visible in the show room in Weißenkirchen, feltmaking and textile art don't deserve their relative obscurity in contemporary art. Here the numerous objects made of wool or textiles put the two artists seamlessly into a proper notion of their place and meaning in the exhibition concept. Embedded in painting, object art and photography the works turned into expressive, meaningful and probing instruments inviting the many visitors to follow an artistic dialogue from the core. When different techniques and materials challenge each other, answer, amplify and form, step by step, a collective statement, the result is the merging of a relational, connective message by two strong, artistic and individual selves, I-positions, into the scope of a common US.

BARBARA FÜREDER

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Felt in Full Bloom

Five artists from Flanders presented their work in a florist's studio.

Felt and Floristry: That both crafts are in perfect harmony could be seen at the second exhibit of felt artists from Flanders titled »Vlaanderen Vilt (Felt from Flanders)« which took place this time in the studio of the internationally renowned florist Geert Pattyn in Geluwe, Belgium. Annie Lens, Goedele Heidebüchel, Magda Guillemy, Marina Lammens and Tine Germer, whose works were presented amidst beautiful floral compositions by their host, had heeded the invitation of the Textivision Agency that concerns itself with textile design and fashion at the occasion of a »day of open studios«.

A Sofa With a Felted Cover

Each of the five artists had their own way of approaching the subject matter wool and felt. Magda Guillemy, who together with Annie Lens had organized the show, makes three-dimensional wall hangings. For »Vlaanderen Vilt« she had designed a couch with knitted and felted covering. She also likes to combine pottery – her second passion – with felt.

∞ Tine Germer uses different materials, from gold leaf to hand-made paper for her felted objects. She showed felted vessels provided with the porcelain lids of vintage coffee pots and felted birds hiding in the garden. She also used Ecoprinting for her felted garments.

∞ Goedele Heidebüchel's works come across very subtle. For this exhibit she made several little benches to sit on. In the felted seats she worked in silk fabrics and other materials. The elegant handbags as well as a small treasure, embroidered with pearls were also much admired.

Homage to Chickens

Maria Lamsens felted mountain sheep fleeces and decorated them with blossoms embroidered with plant-dyed, hand-spun woolen threads. The five cushions with exceptional floral motifs left a powerful, clear impression on the viewer. The three felted chickens were a reminder of her own animals that had been taken by a fox.

∞ Annie Lens explores all possible aspects of feltmaking. She showed a whole array of different objects: A coat that she made in a master course held

by the late Inge Bauer, a streamer in Ecoprint technique, a three-dimensional carpet with a sea-horse motif, a small dog and playful birdhouses to hang in the trees. Forty poppy blossoms were part of a project by which Annie Lens and 25 other women from her village commemorated the end of WW I a hundred years ago.

☞ The exhibit drew a big audience that was as enchanted by the felt art as by the floral compositions by the host. Towards the ending the Textivision Agency offered a day of study, where the timeless character of felt was emphasized. Still today, feltmaking is alive and kicking and forms a perfect component of the overall desired, valuable ecological system.

ANNIE LENS

PAGE 24-26

Character Heads from Wool Packets

Silke Sordyl shows how to make expressive faces in needle-felt technique in Burghthann.

In the beginning there is only a great heap of skin-colored mountain sheep wool on a table. Nine women take portions out of it, form balls and treat them with the felting needle. How is it possible that individual, expressive heads will be made from such more or less regularly formed clumps, one looking rather like the other? We will see! To kindle our motivation and to build up confidence our teacher Silke Sordyl had brought some of her self-made gnomes and an almost finished head specimen (see *Filzfun* No. 56, 4/2017, page 32ff.). That the renowned felt artist, whose Facebook page »Fairyfelt by SiSo« boasts of 6000 fans would come from her chosen home in Illinois to Germany in order to give a total of three weekend workshops in Franconia and Westphalia spread like wildfire in the scene, so all three were fully booked in a wink. The host Carmen Wager herself had got to know Silke Sordyl via Facebook five years ago and since then they have exchanged messages almost daily.

☞ So it stood to reason to invite the artist and ardent animal lover as a tutor. All women who needle at the basic form in Carmen Wagner's studio »Filzkeller« in Burghthann near Nuremberg consider

themselves lucky to have gotten hold of one of the much sought-after places. Some of them even came as far as Switzerland.

☞ »The whole head is built from small packets«, Silke Sordyl explains. A pear-shaped, rolled-up bundle turns into the nose, a bigger one into a chin. All needle attentively, so that at times you can only hear the sound made by the needles going in and out of the work pieces, which grow denser in the process. Silke Sordyl has brought along a whole array of felting needles of different thickness – from coarse ones to hasten the densification of the basic form to the extra-fine model 46 for the finishing process.

No Flawless Beauty

One after the other, more packets are made into the back of the head, the upper lip, the cheeks and – indispensable for our figurines – a double chin. Flawless beauty is not our aim: The heads should have a personality, mirroring a life lived through.

☞ In the meantime we try out the positioning of the eyes in order to test their effect, and indeed: The faster the first day goes by, the more markedly the differences between the individual heads become. Some of us continue to needle-felt them in their hotel rooms in order to render the head form perfect.

The Eyes Open

The following day is dedicated to the final touch: Our heads get eyelids, lips and wrinkles. For the upper lids we felt flat strips by means of which we first cover the eye area completely and then we open them up again by cautious stitches with fine needles from below. A veritable light-bulb moment – our figurine looks at us quite animatedly!

☞ Small wool rolls turn into lower lids, mini-»sausages« wound around a toothpick turn into crows' feet and forehead wrinkles, and with a red pencil we color lips, cheeks and sometimes the noses of our heads. A solid roll serves for the neck of the figurine which is now firm and resembling a club.

☞ During the work we had great fun in thinking up names and personal histories for our character heads. Martina Ziegler named her doll *Salvie*: She will collect sage for holy smoking purposes. Heike Schoener and Kathrin Sägerser from Switzerland see in their heads *Trudi* and *Eugen Chifler*, who stand for »crabbing folks« in Swiss German. *Andrea Juravle*

had brought pink fabric for *Rosalinde's* dress and *Erika Amon's* head is a reminiscence of her uncle *Theodore*.

Sheep Curls for a Hairdo

At long last, *Silke Sordyl* unpacks her greatest treasures: Curls of her own flock of sheep that she brought all the way from Illinois to Franconia. Each doll head gets a hairdo enhancing its personality – a wild mane her, coaxing knots above the ears, beards, tonsures and bushy eyebrows. Before we arranged our objects for a group picture on the garden wall, *Silke Sordyl* explains how the hands are made from florist wire and wool. It took two days to needle the heads. The heap of skin-colored wool had shrunk considerably.

☞ We will finish the body, arms, legs and feet at home at a later date and then we will dress our dolls and adorn them with different accessories.

☞ *Nadja Weiser-Brandt's* *Irmi* wears a hand-felted hooded cloak over her cotton dress and *Angelika Sautter's* forest ambler *Irmela* a hand-crocheted shawl and knitted cuffs. *Andrea Juravle's* *Rosalinde* is a wonder in pink lace and *Heike Schoener* made a tiny teddy bear for *Trudi*, whereas *Martina Ziegler* sends her *Salvie* to sage-gathering in hand-felted and knitted garments in violet and green.

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 27-29

Custom-Made Felt Boots

A Shoe Course with Sabine Reichert-Kassube and Franco Mertes in Elvira Altdorf's Studio Near Aachen

Felted shoes – what should be unusual about them? After all, many people greatly value felted slippers for a warm and agreeable homestaying. In our regions, however, one hardly sees felted shoes or boots as streetwear. How such boots, perfectly suited to the outdoors, are made was demonstrated by *Sabine Reichert-Kassube* from Berlin-Friedrichshagen during a course in *Elvira Altdorf's* studio in *Übach-Palenberg* near *Aachen*, directly at the German-Dutch border. The hand-made, finished shoes

were properly soled by the orthopedic shoemaker Franco Mertens from Basweiler.

Rustic or Playful

Highly motivated and concentrated the group worked for three days, also enjoying the idyllic surroundings, the culinary spoils and the intensive effects of being freed of everyday's routine. One member of the group used a wheelchair, and since Evara Altdorf's premises were barrier-free, she could move around unhindered. The shoes and boots that were made were as different at the people creating them: either solid or playful, elegant or sportive, but always comfortable and tailored to each pair of feet individually.

☞ As demonstration material Sabine Reichert-Kassube had brought along various colorful shoes and boots. By means of these she showed the great variety of possibilities to make and finish them plus the different ways to put soles on them or how to fasten them. The workshop's participants visualized their plans and wishes during discussions and, of course, in a detailed, calculated design sketch on paper.

☞ Each of them made a felted test pattern afterwards into which the desired materials were integrated. By means of this test sample and the measurements of the foot and legprints the feltmakers could calculate the amount of wool required as well as the stencil measurements for both shoes with great precision.

Creative Material Mix

The wool was then put on the two shoe stencils simultaneously and felted in several layers. Some course members took advantage of the possibility to combine different materials. So next to fabrics, ribbons and different kinds of wool also sequins were felted in.

☞ Sabine Reichert-Kassube put a great emphasis on long-lasting and careful felting, because felt only achieves the necessary quality and sturdiness. The bootstrap stretcher modelling was of utmost importance, first on the stretcher itself and then on each member's foot or leg.

A Blank Across the Stretcher

In order to make the shoes comfortable, healthy and fit for an everyday street use, durable soles and heels had to be provided. For that purpose, the footprints of each participant were taken with the help of a step foam kit. The felt blank

was then felted across a stretcher until the felted shoe was fitting perfectly over the stretching device. The shoes were then finished (i.e. soled) in Franco Mertens' studio.

☞ He is an orthopedic shoemaker from Baesweiler near Aachen. He advised the participants intensely and skillfully and explained the many steps it takes to achieve a perfectly fitting, resilient shoe. He had brought many specimen of materials for processing and finishing, i.e. colored soles, equally colorful, exquisite leather for trimmings, thread eyes and rivets.

☞ After the boots were finally fully he sat down with each participant to discuss further finishing, and with his great skill he processed all the shoes until they were fit for outdoor use.

ALESSA HABERMANN

PAGE 30-31

The Human Face in Focus

Course »Human Masks« with Gladys Paulus in Oberrot

Fully felted masks have been part of Gladys Paulus' course program for a while now. Until now, a human mask was one of many subjects within her program called »Phantasy Masks«, where both animals and fantasy creatures are made, the artist decided to offer an exclusive mask course in Oberrot. Only the human face should be in focus. »It is an experiment«, she says – and one which went exceedingly well.

A Much in Demand Instructor

The Dutch artist with Indonesian roots, well-known through her show »Hinterland (Backlands)« (filzfun No. 58/Spring 2018) lives in England. She travels a lot and teaches her method of mask-making all over the world. Her master courses are internationally much sought after and practically always fully booked. This is why the small group of feltmakers who managed to secure a vacancy in Oberrot were more than happy and felt privileged to take up this opportunity. Some had previous experiences with mask felting, other not at all. Together with their very structured and helpful teacher they embarked on a five-day journey, at the

end of which stood a stable full mask that had been felted according to each individual design.

☞ It was of great importance for Gladys Paulus to pass on assistance, instruction and knowledge to those who are dedicated to learn more about the human anatomy and its physical appearances. She freely shared her enormous knowledge gathered over the years, for example in matters how to get the proportions right or to achieve a certain sturdiness with bigger mask projects. »Human masks are much more naked in a sense that you cannot hide behind animal features«, she declared: A face always remains a face – for us it is easier to perceive or interpret than an animal form. It awakens feelings which can get close – very close.

From Skeleton to Skin

So the participants worked through the bone structure of their design (stencil calculation) over the flesh (layers of different kinds of wool) to the skin (surface structure and felting) during the felting part of the courses.

☞ On the fourth day finally, the time had come to move on to the third dimension. The stencils were removed, and the second part, the plastic finishing could begin. Here at last the grandiose connection of skilled feltmaking and sculpturing became obvious. It took the students many hours to breathe life into their masks, to form it according to their inner vision – or to get acquainted with the characteristics the mask wanted to convey on her own.

☞ Our journey led up the heights of curiosity and excitement as well as down to the valleys of physical struggle and the challenge to maintain contact with the workpiece throughout all required steps, especially when it seemed to change its countenance readily by only the slightest change. Gladys Paulus, at all times, remained as firm as a rock – a proficient travel guide who led us all safely around both outer and inner impassibilities.

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Animal Masks

November 2nd to 6th, 2019

Atelier Fiberfusing, Amsteldijk Zuid

180e, Nes aan de Amstel, Niederlande

www.fiberfusing.blogspot.com

Seedpods

November 9th to 10th, 2019

Atelier Fiberfusing (see above)

Human Masks in Felt

November 13th to 17th, 2019

Vrouw Wolle, Kapelstraat 81, 2910

Essen, Belgien

www.vrouwwolle.be

Gladys Paulus on the internet

www.gladyspaulus.co.uk

PAGE 34-37

Felt Ambassador

Susanne Schächter-Heil is a felt designer, a dedicated volunteer worker and an author

For more than a quarter of a century Susanne Schächter-Heil has been working with unspun sheep wool. Since then she has tried out many techniques and has never ever lost her joy in working with this natural source. Quite on the contrary: For many years she has been committed to get the public acquainted with felt, to foster its image and to alert people to its different qualities – as a feltmaker and instructor and since 2015 as chair of the German Filz-Netzwerk. And, only recently, as the author of the knowledge base book »Filzen« (Felting) that just came out in the Leopold Stocker publishing house.

☞ Initially, the artist, who is 62 years old, wanted to be a fashion buyer and to travel around the world. »But then I found myself in the education program of the company, I taught apprentices, trained personnel and accompanied organization

processes«, she recalls. In the scope of an EU project she studied in-company education and training. After a blow of fate she decided to become independent as a freelancer. »To accompany people, to make learning, communicating and co-working easier for them has always been of great importance to me.«

First Contact at a Waldorf Kindergarten

Her two daughters visited the Waldorf Kindergarten in Frankfurt, and this is where Susanne Schächter-Heil first came into contact with yet unspun sheep wool. »I remember as if it were yesterday when I first held the material in my hands«, she remembers, still enthusiastic. »My first work was a fairy tale image made of wool modeled after a page in a picture book. The handling, the color effects and the result were awesome to me. Ever since that moment the material has never let hold of me.«

☞ At the end of the 1990ies she met Beate Bossert on a handicraft fair, who introduced her to felting needles. »This was a jump start«, she says. »All of a sudden, the wool had no longer to be knotted, sewed or wound. I did not have to iron the images anymore. The wool could be formed, or stayed put where it was, patterns emerged. What a luxury!« In Frankfurt as well as later, after having moved to Berlin, Susanne Schächter-Heil made figurines for the Waldorf Kindergarten and school's so-called »Season Table« together with other parents.

Wet-felting in Structural Design

During a course with Rotraud Reinhard she learned about structural design in wet-felting, which soon became her favorite technique. »When a figurine, an animal or a fairy tale creature finally emerges from the wool on its own account, I am happy as a child«. It was also Rotraud Reinhard who told her about the Oberrot felting school. From 2011 to 2014, Susanne Schächter-Heil together with ten other aspiring felt designers learned about all aspects of wet-felting. She was quite overwhelmed »by all the possibilities hidden in the material and the various results one can achieve.« She is glad: »So in a way I finally got to travel, at least virtually. To get to know wool from Island and South America is one of the gifts the felting school holds ready for you.«

☞ For a long time, Susanne Schächter-Heil has been an instructor in Oberrot

herself. She teaches aspiring referees of creative courses on a regular basis under the motto »Kurs aufnehmen« (Being on target).

Useful Items Preferred

Felting for her is mainly work with the hands. »To release power and tension and to create something«. She prefers to make useful things such as cushions or water bottle coverings, child vests etc. and philosophizes: »No matter how practical such a work piece may be, it has grown out of fibers.« She does not call herself an artist, but begs to differ: »I feel creativity in the initial sense of the word very strongly when I make figurines. I came from the »dry« technique, and there were my little dolls and images the origin of my working with unspun wool. They were always fragile, you couldn't play with them. I still feel their appeal, and it touches me, but to make a figurine grow out of wet wool, to work on her expression, to dress and put her on her feet is something entirely different.« Susanne Schächter-Heil loves to work with fine wool fleece. »Only for garments I use roving.« Recently she »adopted« a sheep that provides her with raw wool once a year for processing.

Room for Creativity

For three years now she has been dedicating a whole room to felting in her house in Kleinmachnow. »Here I work alone or with colleagues, I hold courses here and I wrote my book about felting here as well.« Felting always remains the most wonderful thing next to her job as an advisor, and both profit from one another. For example, when a wall hanging is felted during a team training course, or she employs a felted »family board« for counselling or invites the participants to a relaxed fantasy trip in a felting course.

☞ Her experience as counsellor and supervisor has proved helpful for her position as chair of the Filz Netzwerk where she tirelessly promotes felting in many ways. »Our material is wool, felt is our product.«, she explains. During the time she has been in office, a voluntary quality control was developed and the so-called felt chest for children which can be borrowed by schools. This is not enough for her. »Even though one of the things most dear to our hearts is working with children, felt should not be regarded as a mere kindergarden handicraft.« Sometimes, »in bold moments«, she dreams of a publicity campaign like the

British »Campaign for Wool«: Maybe one day we could induce spinners, weavers, shepherds, feltmakers, tailors and fiber dealers to start common public relation procedures.«

~ In about two years, Susanne Schächter-Heil wants to give up her position as chair in the Filz-Netzwerk. »I want to have more time for my own feltmaking, I would like to write another book where my figurines have the main part and last but not least, I would like to inspire more course instructors«, so her plans. »And I really want to go to Iceland.«

HELENE WEINOLD

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Felting is Her Life

Amongst other objects, Annie Veldkamp designs artful, sound insulating wall coverings.

In the 1970ies, teenager tended to paper the walls of their party room with egg cartons to dampen the rock music pervading the whole house: It didn't look great but worked well to the purpose. Consider how much more stylish Annie Veldkamp's felted sound-insulating wall units are! Of a noble grey with discreet color effects, intricate structures that literally call out to being touched, felt and traced with the fingertips – hers are unique art objects made of wool, sustainable, ecologically safe and of a decidedly modern look and feel. Annie Veldkamp is a passionate felt art enthusiast. »Felting is my life«, admits the Dutch lady who lives with her husband and three children in Sint-Oedenrode north of Eindhoven and works there as well. She has been managing her studio AV look since 2000. Five years later she began dealing intensively with felt as a working material. 2011 the self-made artist graduated from the Filarski Art Academy.

Inspired by Nature

Felt fascinates her through its dazzling variety of processing or use. »One can do so many different things with it«, she says. »I value felt as a natural product.« Nature is the most important source of inspiration for the 54-year old artist. She puts a lot of emphasis on surface structure design. »If I my work were put in natural surroundings the two should merge.«

~ She uses Merino wool for her felted objects, but also other kinds that she orders at Sikko Oegema (»De Weidonk«). If she needs specially dyed fibers for a certain project, Jolande van Luijk or Rachel van der Weerd (»Het kleine huis«) will be of assistance.

~ Annie Veldkamp hand-felts exclusively. She says: »I want to touch the felt and feel when it is ready.« The felting technique is combined with several »old-fashioned handicrafts«, such as knitting, smocking, Smyrna-knotting and Shibori, just to name a few. Special effects are further achieved with screen printing.

Work to Order

Her wall coverings and artful interior decoration objects are made to order, »always one piece after another.« This means that her clients have to be patient until it is their turn. With the sound-insulating elements she is in co-operation with Incatro, a company specializing in room acoustics.

~ If she were all by herself she could hardly handle the workload. Therefore she is happy to have volunteers around who assist her in the studio, people who like this daily job. She also employs student trainees for the big-size objects.

Travelling with the Camper Van

Before, Annie Veldkamp used to instruct felting courses in her studio, but now she lacks the time. »I am too busy with the projects for my clients«, she says regretfully. The same goes for personal hobbies. »My work is my hobby«, she says. But when she manages to tear herself away from the studio she goes on camper van trips with her husband.

~ Deep in her heart, though, Annie Veldkamp has only one wish, »that I will be able to keep doing my work as long as possible.« She is looking forward to many new challenges, but always true to her motto: »Naturally beautiful. Beautifully natural.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 44-47

The Song of Nature

Bahar Bozaci makes fine art objects with plant dye on fabrics or leather, but also on stone and ceramics.

Blossoms grow on clothing and bags, shoes, even on cups: Bahar Bozaci has perfected the Ecoprinting technique and designs and decorates felt, fabrics, leather, paper, ceramics and stones with enchanting shapes of leaves and blossoms in a natural way.

~ The artist, who is 42 today and lives with her son and husband in Izmir in Turkey, used to study textile arts and design in the academy of arts and has been working in the textile design field for more than 20 years now. »After I found out about the noxious chemicals used in the textile industry branch, I was on the lookout for a more environmental-friendly printing technique. I gathered all information about Ecoprinting I could lay my hands on«, she says. »Today I express my personality in this beautiful technique. I use plant-dyed fabrics with Ecoprints as a background for my work. By using patchwork or linoprint I try to »paint« on a textile surface.«

Metaphysical Experience

A metaphysical encounter inspired the Turkish artist to find her personal artistic path. »I was taking a walk one day. All of a sudden, I began to shiver, and turned right. I saw trees along a big street. They all turned to each other and kind of huddled together. I see these same trees all the time here in the city, but this time it was completely different. It was as if they were telling me: 'Hey, we are here! You are not alone; you are one of us.' It made me realize that many, many people live and function like robots. They have forgotten where they come from. We have built a great civilization, but we are alone in fact, because we have forgotten Mother Earth.«

~ Bahar Bozaci does not understand on what the human arrogance is founded. »All living things share the same breath – animal, tree and human being«, she quotes the Indian Chief Seattle. »We are all mortal and return to dust, like the plants and animals as well.«

~ This realization is behind Bahar Bozaci's artistic work. »I listen to the song of nature«, she simply states.

Fabric is Stained

In a nutshell, her printing technique works like this: »Ecoprinting is an environment-friendly technique where parts of plants are wound up in fabric or felt. Then the bundles are steamed or dyed in a plant-based color bath. Under the right conditions a beautiful print results through the long contact of leaf or blossom with the carrier material. In order

to convey the image of the plant you use the substances it contains. Textiles – either silk, wool, cotton or linen can be put into mordant solutions either before, during or after the printing process.«

☞ How the print will eventually appear depends on many factors, according to Bahar Bozaci. Depending on the type of plant, exposure time, quality and the pH-value of the water, transposing method and fiber type you get wholly different results. Sometimes the artist plans an effect deliberately, sometimes she lets herself be surprised while working in a studio in the mountains or in her other studio in »beautiful Izmir«.

☞ Her plant prints have found ardent fan base all over the world who visit her exhibitions or follow her on Instagram or Facebook.

Courses Via Skype

In Turkey and in The Netherlands, she has instructed courses in Ecoprinting, dyeing with natural colors and Shibori, but she gets into each and every angle on earth by her courses via Skype. Per video telephone she has instructed students from Brazil to Borneo, from Canada to the Canary Islands. Furthermore, she passes on her experience and skill in her book »The Song of Nature«, which has been available also in English since last year. ☞ Her love for nature and her joyous work fill the life of Bahar Bozaci almost a full extent. And this should remain so, as she wishes: »I will continue to trace beauty!«

HELENE WEINOLD

Masterclasses with Bahar Bozaci

In Istanbul and Amsterdam Bahar Bozaci holds courses in Ecoprinting and plant dyeing repeatedly – currently on August 31st and September 1st 2019 in the Atelier Fiberfusing (Ecoprinting on Leather.) Courses via Skype can be arranged individually (see contact dates below)

Book about Ecoprinting

Her book »The Song of Nature« (110 pages) about her Ecoprinting technique can be had as a PDF in English and can be ordered per mail directly at the author's. The price is 30 €.

Bahar Bozaci

www.baharbozaci.com
Facebook: baharbozacidesigns
Instagram: @bzcabhar
Mail: bozaciabhar@gmail.com

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Cows, Funny and Serious

The exhibit titled COWandMORE by the Guldusi Project showed a great variety of communal projects made by Afghan and German textile artists.

Cows were the center of attention in the latest textile art tender by Guldusi, an embroidering project of the German-Afghan Initiative (DAI): 200 Afghan women embroidered images of cows which were to be integrated in the works of other textile artists. This wealth of ideas proved fantastic: Funny and serious were the objects, done in all kinds of different techniques, including feltmaking. From 61 works handed in 48 were chosen by the jury for the travelling show COWandMORE which could be seen, next to other places, during the handicraft fair h+h cologne.

☞ Whoever wanted to take part had to include at least one Afghan cow image in a work piece measuring 30 x 70 cm, the animal serving as a kind of inspiration carrier. In the invitation letter for the competition the importance of cattle for Afghanistan was emphasized: It stands for a visible economic progress in this country. Ten years ago, one seldom saw a cow in a rural home. Nowadays many of the embroidering women can afford to buy one of their own.

☞ Some merry works brightened up the venture: One rather heavy cow floats up in the air and flies away (Sabine Frank), the counting-out rhyme »Ene Mene Muh« sounds like their mooing, according to Luitgard Möschle. With »Going Home«, Barbara Rentrop-Metner offers a fresh, skillful interpretation of the German fairy tale »Die Bremer Stadtmusikanten«.

Political Thought-Provoking Impulses

»Afghanistan – as it was 40 years ago«: The title of this work by Mari Drachsel refers to the cultural and political development of the country over the last four decades and is of current interest indeed: Cattle is used as teams in agriculture, tractors hardly exist. In »It is time to change« Bettina Jakob Paul muses over McCartney's dictum »If slaughterhouses had glass walls we would all become vegetarians«. Sylvia Tischer informs us in her rather cow-critical oeuvre »Eine Kuh macht nicht nur Muh (A Cow Doesn't Just

Moo)« amongst other facts that a single cow or steer produces 300 l of methane and drinks up to 80 l of water daily.

Disregard – Esteem

Beatrice Lohse and Beate Schmidt put many serious thoughts into their communal felt work »Missachtung – Wertschätzung (Disregard-Esteem): The situation of Afghan women in their war-devastated country, the meaning and value of cattle there compared with the heedless European industrial animal keeping. The centerpiece is a cow image embroidered by the Afghan Raisa. »The animal has travelled far. Now it has found the home we made especially for it, in a felted landscape offering shelter and support,« the two artists comment.

☞ That the Afghan embroideries are perfect for incorporating them in different felting techniques has already become obvious during former shows organized by the Guldusi program. In the present case, the haptic surface conveys the closeness of the animal and presents a link to the subject in question, even though cows usually have a smooth hide. They represent any domesticated animal in Afghanistan and their special connection to man. Be it a camel (with the nomadic population), donkey, ox, cow, sheep or goat – even if a family can afford just one of those animals, it is a symbol of wealth that we Europeans can neither grasp nor judge.

PASCALE GOLDENBERG
www.guldusi.de

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Violence Turns Visible

Doris Breuer und Laura Poberer convert women's sad experiences into art.

A white felted cuboid of the height of a man caught everybody's eye on the Hauptplatz in the Austrian city Linz during the International Women's Day on March 8th and during an open-air festival in Ottensheim. With their object »Sichtbar« (Visible) the two artists Doris Breuer and Laura Poberer wanted to draw public attention to the increasing violence towards women and to invite the female audience to contribute their own experiences.

☞ The object »Sichtbar« is a 1.80 x 1.80 big and 36 cm deep cuboid that is

sheathed in white felt with worked-in silk and lace. Felt stands for connecting and is a symbol for shelter and support. In the front are three female portraits, whose faces represent moments of violence and survival: the silent or silenced woman, one that takes off a mask and another one who has seemingly regained her strength.

☞ On the back the felted surface is not as flawless as on the front. A black line with many colored felted points which crosses the whole surface diagonally shows the criminal investigation department's statistics concerning female homicides in Austria from 2014 to 2018. Every three centimeters a murder – 41 women dead.

☞ Slits serving as doors have been cut into the felt. They invite the audience to explore the object from the inside and to discover the »spaces« behind it. In the two so-called »Sprachräumen« (Spaces to Speak) you find experiences of women who have suffered violence printed on synthetic material.

☞ The »Raum der Unsichtbarkeit« (Invisibility Space) hints at the household chores, here represented by felted-over kitchen tools, a wooden spoon and a knife. The housework continues to be mainly the women's job. Their part in doing housework comes to twice as much compared to men: Invisible work, carried out in the privacy of the home. This is also the place where most women are violently attacked.

Sheltering Felted Cave

»Schutzraum (Protection Room) is a felted cave that fills a whole room. Inside is a small seedling which serves as a symbol for shelter, taking root, hope and moving on. The expansive presence of the netted, woven felt structure is an allegory for protection one might find by being embedded in social contacts.

☞ »Sichtbar« challenges the female audience to hand in their own experiences anonymously. As text or image they will appear in the next exhibition locale, they turn visible.

☞ The co-operation for »Sichtbar« stemmed from our joint interest in community and feminist subjects. The increase of female homicides in Austria in 2019 was the reason to deal with violence against women in the form of a public art object.

DORIS BREUER AND LAURA POBERER

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Fungi as Models

Eva-Maria Wirth re-creates tree fungi in felt.

During a walk through the autumn woods, Eva-Maria Wirth's attention was caught by some tree fungi. She fascinated by their form and their manifold shapes. She took photos and tried to felt similar specimen, also integrating other textile materials in the process. The result was a small series of images in the format 12 cm x 12 cm. But the passionate feltmaker did not stop at making images but started to research about fungi or mushrooms in general, a field of fascinating discoveries, as she puts it. The »co-operation« between fungus and tree is a successful model for growth and survival. She ponders on the question: »Could it provide a useful, even necessary strategy to help mankind?«

☞ Eva-Maria Wirth, born 1952 in Rothenburg/Oberlausitz is a professional weaver, has a degree in education science and as an occupational therapist. Some 20 years ago she taught herself how to felt. Over the years she had further training during a three-week summer academy held by Inge Bauer and Beatrice Schaaf-Gießler in Oberrot as well as in courses hosted by Lyda Rump, Annemie Koenen, Ricarda Aßmann and other instructors.

Variety and Refinement

»Working with textile materials has been running like the proverbial common thread through my whole life«, she tells us. »The techniques and emphases might vary, but never my enthusiasm. When I first started feltmaking I had no idea how much variety, joy, quality experience, refinement and technical possibilities I might find.«

☞ She has shown her work in several single and group exhibitions in the Ruhr area. She passes on her skills in courses and instructs Feltmaking Projects at different schools in Essen.

Finest Shades

The artist still remains entranced by the fact »how single, loose fibers can be slowly turned into a sturdy or fine surface or form by well-allotted physical power and a lot of patience with just soap and water. It is equally thrilling how finest shades of color can be achieved by combining single colors and how objects achieve either a firm or a delicate character.«

☞ The 67-year old artist is also very much taken by the many ways in which expressive surface structures and effects can be reached by inserting non-textile materials. The surface structures can be decorated further »for example by embroidering, re-dyeing, folding or gilding.«

HELENE WEINOLD

PAGE 52-53

Sheep & Wool: Iceland Sheep

History

Iceland sheep are the only ones you can find in the least populated European country: Approx. 500 000 sheep as opposed to 350 000 people live on Iceland. The ancestors of the present Iceland Sheep were brought to the island by the early Vikings in the ninth and tenth century. Like Heidschnucke, Skudde, Spaelsau, the Iceland Sheep belongs to the category of Nordic short-tailed sheep. Most likely it is the oldest and purest domesticated sheep race existing in the world.

☞ In the meantime, it has adapted well to the climatic conditions on Iceland and is said to be very sturdy. Although they are famous for their wool worldwide, in Iceland they are bred for their meat. Nevertheless, the sheep breeders have never neglected the factor wool in their selecting efforts.

☞ In the 1930ies they did some breeding tests with imported sheep which led to a grave disease among the Iceland sheep: Despite a long quarantine, imported sheep brought in the so-called Maedi-Visna virus. It took almost 30 years until the island declared itself freed of the virus. Now it is forbidden to bring other sheep races to the island.

Description

Iceland sheep are of middle height and quite broad in the beam. Concerning feeding, they are undemanding. Both sexes can be either horned or without horns. As it is the case with many ancient breeds also the Iceland Sheep are in heat seasonally. The ewes are very fecund, twin birth is common and – according to the respective husbandry, they can even give birth to three lambs at a time. The

ewes mature early and can give birth already at the age of twelve months.

Wool

The sheep have hair only at the legs, the head and the udder, the rest of the body is covered in thick, long fleece. What is really wonderful is the wide range of color, e.g. white, creamy brown, reddish brown and grey to a deep black that doesn't even fade out at the hairs' end. In contrast to the wool of other Nordic short-tailed sheep the fleece of the Iceland sheep consists of only two kinds of fibers: the long top hair (kemp) and the unbelievably fine underwool. Therefore, these two types can be separated in batches and processed accordingly.

Wool Assessment and Felting Tests

As described above, the Iceland Sheep are of many different colors. But this isn't enough: Also, within the fleece there are considerable differences. With few other sheep races the difference between back and flank wool is more obvious. While the back wool presents itself in fine curls, the flank wool comes in light waves. The wool on the back is a lot stiffer than the kemp on the sides. Evolution and breeding did a good job.

Because the back hair has to be stable in order not to lose its abundance during strong rains or snowfall, the kemp on the sides is ideal for deviating the water. The extremely thick underwool has its share in keeping the sheep warm and dry also during the extreme weather conditions on Iceland. The wool does not seem to contain a lot of lanolin, a thin oily layer on the fibers is obviously enough. A weighing test shows that the wool consists of more than 40 percent underwool despite the extremely long kemp. The back wool doesn't separate easily since the difference in length of the two fiber types is not so marked. Some kemp also remain in the underwool with irritating effects. The felting test was therefore made with wool from the flanks. With all sheep breeds previously introduced a felting test showed clearly that the thinly laid out felts shrink a lot stronger than the thicker ones. I will limit myself to a test series with 10 g wool each and I will treat the separated

fibers differently. Most likely the top hair will felt badly or not at all, whereas the underwool will felt very well.

The laying out presents the usual difficulties of long-haired wool fibers. The kemp always tend to fall together into thin strands, which can be easily separated, but at their first contact with water they melt together again. On first glance this seems to be true. But with continued processing even the top hair surface seems to shrink and turns into a connected piece of felt. But as it happens often, also here appearances are deceiving. The pseudo-felt from the top hair actually did shrink but it is no felt in the sense of the word. The hairs are only knotted and can be pulled apart without much effort and without destroying the fibers. We remember: Felt is the irreversible connection of wool fibers...

Felting Furs

Unfortunately also another foreboding turns out to be true: that kemp hair do not stay in the felted fur. Similar to the wool of the Heidschnucke, one can make beautiful felted furs from Iceland sheep wool, but their durability is limited, since the top hair don't adhere to the felt.

YASMIN GROSS AND MARGIT RÖHM

PAGE 54-55

Stencils in the Right Scale

This is how you enlarge felting patterns according to the different shrinking factors of wool.

Quite often you may find it difficult to make a pattern bigger in proportion to the desired shrinking factor. But only then a felting project will be of the right size after fulling is finished. This graphic method (here described with a glove) is easy to calculate and works also with more intricate forms without any problems.

The desired form, e.g. the glove pattern in the desired end size is put on a big piece of paper or directly onto foil, then the outlines are drawn. Take care that enough room remains around the contour.

Important: The Reference Point

This outline is provided with a point in the center. It serves as a reference point from which all measurements are taken. On principle this may also work from a corner point, but then you get many lines so close to one another that it becomes difficult to tell them apart.

Draw points on the contour all the way round. These should preferably be positioned in corners or rounded parts. Straight lines are sufficiently defined by the two end points. Connect each of these points with the center.

Connect the Points

In order to fix the respective point on the enlarged contour the line is lengthened. Then the original measurement is multiplied with the desired shrinking factor and the new measurement is drawn on the line. When all points are newly set in this method all points should be connected. So you get a new, enlarged form.

The more complicated the form the more points are required to define the contour exactly. But this method works with each and any form and can also be used when you want to minimize the size of a certain shape.

MARGIT RÖHM
www.triluna.de

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Stencil for the HatCap

We would like to apologize for having accidentally omitted a paragraph concerning the calculation and preparation of the stencil in our instruction for the HatCap (filzfun No. 63, 3/19, p. 58ff.) Please find below the missing information:

Measure the circumference of the head. In our example we assume a head circumference of 58 cm. With three layers from half of the wool each the shrinking factor is 1.6. The stencil is calculated as follows:

58 : 2 = 29
29 x 1.6 = 46.4

| | Size at the beginning | Size at the end | Shrinking factor |
|------------|-----------------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Whole wool | 20 x 20 cm | 11,5 x 11,65 cm | 1,73 |
| Top Hair | 20 x 20 cm | 15 x 15 cm | no felt |
| Underwool | 20 x 20 cm | 10 x 10 cm | 2 |

∞ The cone-shaped stencil should be about 46.5 cm wide and 60 cm high, whereby the side edges in the lower half should be a trifle steeper than in the upper half. Draw the stencil onto bubble foil or thin footfall sound insulation foil and cut it out.

∞ The whole instruction with many step-by-step photos you can find in the above-mentioned issue that can be ordered via www.filzfun.de.

PAGE 58-62

Lively Wind Chimes

As an autumn child, Beate Bossert loves the wind that renders all kinds of things alive. It also lets small wind chimes dance. Of course, Beate Bossert's wind chimes made from felt. They hang in the trees, on small hooks around the terrace and above the heater in winter: smaller and bigger, lively wind chimes which whirl around and around at a light breeze. To share this dancing and whirling with you, the felt artist shows how such chimes are made.

Materials

- ∞ Pencil
- ∞ Pointed, sharp pair of scissors
- ∞ Foam material foil (thin footfall sound insulation foil) for the stencil
- ∞ Bubble wrap
- ∞ Sponge cloth
- ∞ Cloth
- ∞ Wool
- ∞ Felting equipment: nylon gauze, ball sprinkler, soap, bowl, water
- ∞ Measuring band
- ∞ Pins
- ∞ Balloon

Instructions

Wool

Prepare the wool according to your wishes: monochrome, two colors or colorful all over. The amount required depends on the size of the chimes and your personal way to lay out the wool. Bigger sizes should be laid out thicker than smaller ones, otherwise they lack stability and become easily unhinged during use. For the object in question I used roving. So each step can be followed more easily each layer has a different color, which results in a decorative effect with the later cuttings.

Stencil

1 In order to felt these delicate chimes first you have to make a stencil in the shape of a drop. This drop should be cut out rather stocky, not too slim. Starting from a middle line draw one side of the drop. Fold the foil at the middle line and draw the other side of the drop or cut it out without drawing first.

Loop and Lappet

The details which are to be added later have to be prepared first: A loop to hang the chimes and a lappet for the lower end. For each of these elements you need a small strand of wool. Put the moist sponge cloth on the working table and place a piece of bubble wrap with the bubbly side upwards onto it. (The moist sponge cloth keeps the bubble wrap from shifting)

2 Take a strip away from the roving for the loop, twist it in the middle to test its strength. The lappet is made in a similar manner: Turn the middle of the lappet to test its strength. Add some more wool in the upward chime direction so the lappet becomes thicker.

3 Put some lukewarm water and soap in a small bowl. Water the middle of the loop strand and roll it. Take care that both ends remain dry so you can fasten the loop to the chimes later.

4 After the first rolling movements continue to do so with lightly soapy fingers. When the middle part has somehow connected, take away the bubble wrap and continue to roll directly on the sponge cloth.

5 To make it even firmer proceed to the felting mat. Felt the loop firmly, if it is too soft, it will turn flat when you roll it later.

6 The same goes for the lappet. The fibers should remain dry on one end in order to fasten them to the chimes later. The length you can choose yourself. As the loop, the lappet as well has to be felted really firmly.

The Wind Chimes

7 For the actual wind chimes put the bubble wrap with the smooth side facing upwards onto the sponge cloth, then the nylon gauze and on top of that the drop-shaped stencil.

8 In order to achieve stability later, four layers each per side are laid out like tiles of a roof. Leave some overlap for enveloping the stencil. But towards the point the wool should not overlap or hardly at all so these areas don't get too thick. Extra wool is added anyway by the loop and the lappet.

9 Cover the work with a second piece of gauze and »shower« it gently with the ball sprinkler in the area of the stencil. If possible, leave the edges dry.

10 Press the wool down carefully in the stencil area and put some extra soap onto it by gently pushing a bar of soap across the gauze.

11 Turn the workpiece around and pull the gauze off cautiously. Moisten the stencil with some soapy water so that the fibers stay put when the overlap is turned in.

12 It can be helpful to mark the direction of the fibers by means of a fiber or a thread. So you know in which direction the lay-out took place after the edges have been turned inside.

13 Revert the protruding fibers of the lowest layer upwards. The gauze underneath serves that purpose well. Now lay out the wool on this side, too. Once the first »roof tiles« of the layer determine the direction, the marking thread can be taken out. Lay out the remaining free space with wool.

14 As before, put gauze across the laid-out wool, drench the work piece, soap it, press and turn it around. Remove the above gauze carefully and put the remaining wool around the edges.

15 The second layer should be put in a 90°-angle to the first, then repeat the steps described for the first layer.

16 The third layer should go in the other direction again.

17 A valuable advice: Any wool which protrudes at the tips after the work piece has been turned around should be reverted backwards, a process similar to bookbinding. This refers to all layers.

18 The fourth and last layer crosses the third one in a 90°-angle.

Adding Details

19 Now all layers are made, and the loop can be added. Fan the dry ends outwards. Put one fanned-out end on the tip of the chime so that the fibers protrude to the side and press it down.

20 When turning, hold the beginning of the loop firmly so nothing can shift. (See photo). Put the protruding wool around the edge. Then place the other dry, fanwise end of the loop on this side of the chimes, press it down, turn the workpiece around and turn the protruding fibers over.

21 You can wind around a small amount of wool around the beginning of the loop in order avoid the splitting of the two halves during further processing. It would be best to felt it somewhat.

22 Now the lappet has to be added. Should the dry part be too long, shorten it. Fan the dry end out and add it to the lower tip, turn the workpiece around and add the other side, so that the wool lies like a small chute around the tip.

23 Put the gauze tightly around the edges in order to secure them. Eventually a second piece of gauze should be put on top while felting the lappet firmly in the direction of the chime. So you avoid bulges.

24 Who knows me has been waiting for the next sentence. Well?! There it is: Out with the water! Dab the chimes, still covered with gauze, with a rag or a sponge cloth. Together with the water also soap is removed, so take the piece of soap and let it run over the gauze again.

Felting

25 Start felting the work piece from all sides and knead the areas where loop and lappet begin slightly.

26 Put the chimes parallel to the lower end of the bubble foil. Roll the upper, longer piece of the bubble foil up from above: So you get a rolling core around which the chimes can be wound. Put the gauze tightly around the edges from all sides so the rolling won't cause anything to shift. Then felt as usual: roll tenderly, open the roll, turn the chimes around, roll firmer, open, turn and roll from the bottom or the top, turn, roll...The

rolling shouldn't take too long in order to avoid bulges. It is better to check more often and rewind the workpiece.

27 Latest after the fourth rolling the gauze should be taken away for a test. If the fibers have connected well the gauze is no longer needed, if not, put it on again to protect the chimes. As soon as the fiber connection is complete the edges are shifted towards the middle. If necessary, pull them slightly apart and smooth them out.

28 The bubble wrap is no longer needed. Proceed working on the sponge cloth or felting mat.

29 To fix the chimes roll it into a moist, longer cloth.

30 Change direction after each rolling and shift the edges.

31 Continue to felt until the chimes feel like a solid pod. Now the piece should be rinsed.

»Cosmetics«

32 Our pod is rather fuzzy and has to be shaved. If it gives in during the shaving continue to felt it.

33 After shaving the circumference at the thickest part should be measured and divided in such a way that you get strips 1.5 to 2 cm wide. With bigger chimes the strips can even be wider. But they must never be too narrow because they tend to taper upwards and downwards anyway. If they are too narrow at the beginning the chimes will not be stable. Mark the calculated gaps with pins.

34 Set the first cut with a pointed, sharp pair of scissors next to a pin in both directions.

35 Remove the stencil, which should be doubly the size of the chimes.

36 Then set all other cuts. Pay attention that the cuts are always at the same side of the needle (i.e. always right or always left) Once all cuts are made you can tell whether they are of equal length if you push them together. If not the chimes will get lopsided when pushed together. When the cut is longer the slit opens wider.

Finishing

37 To let the chimes dry in a round form put a balloon in, blow it

up and knot it. The knot remains hidden under the tip.

38 Put the strips a little slantingly by lifting them on one side (same side with all strips) and pull them apart a bit at this edge. In order to dry you can hang the chimes at their designated place.

39 After drying remove the balloon and then the chimes can start to whirl.

BEATE BOSSERT

PAGE 64-65

Szvaneti Khudi

The headgear of the Swanetians from the Georgian Republic.

In the spring of 2019, we travelled towards Mestia between defence towers, fields, gardens, valleys and rocks next to the Enguri river. Our destiny was the administrative center of the region Upper Swanetia, 1500 m above sea level.

☞ The inhabitants are a proud mountain people that has been living in the remoteness of the Great Caucasus valleys for many centuries. Their traditional gear as well as the felted caps of their men are still part of their traditions.

☞ In Mestia we enter the old house of Kigani Kahberidze. Every day she comes, after her work is done, around four o'clock in the afternoon and stays until half past seven in the morning. In the corner of her kitchen she has a small workshop consisting of a low chair, a matching table and some tools. There she makes the traditional, bowl-shaped felt caps called Svaneti Khudi.

☞ »My mom was born in the village Mulakhi in 1934 and passed away two years ago«, Kigani Kahberidze tells us. »I inherited this carved wooden block from her. An old village man made it for her from fir wood.« As did her mother once, also Kigani Kahberidze pulls the almost-ready felt cap over the block to give it form. »All I know I have learned from my mother and I keep doing it in exactly the same way«, she says. But there is one small difference: »My mother used finer lambs' wool and fulled the caps more strongly than I.«

A Companion since 38 Years

But are these felted caps still worn today? Salome, Kigani's daughter in law, shows us an array of caps belonging to the family members. »This bone-white cap I made for my husband. He has been wearing it for 38 years. The grey cap serves him in his daily chores. The black one here belongs to my father-in-law. Since his wife died he has been wearing it every day. I store all the caps on a wardrobe, where they are well-protected. Once a week I take them out into the sun. So the moths – in Georgian »Tschirtschibi« cannot harm them. Traditionally, every man and even boy should have and wear a couple of such caps, at least three.«

Earthen Pot as a Hat Form

Caps for children are made much like the caps for the adults, but the wooden forms are naturally smaller. Kigani Kahberidze has no wooden block in a child's head size, so she uses either an earthen pot or a preserving jar as a substitute model.

In the olden days, a boy got his first felted cap from his grandfather at the age of six months. This child cap from natural-colored wool was an everyday item since the 1970ies. Today the boys only wear them for festivities. When there is a funeral, both men and boys wear black felt caps. A brown one is put onto the coffin and it stays there for 40 days. In the past 30 years, three women in a village made these felted caps mainly in winter as a side job. At present, this ancient handicraft is still most alive in the Mulakhi village. Next to that, the town Mestia and some other villages, e.g. Lendjeri, Latali, Tetnaldi and Hadisi play an important role in the production of such headgear.

Tushetian Felt Cap

In the 1970ies a Tushetian felt cap supplanted the former head gear of other areas in the Georgian Republic. The women living there used a finer and softer kind of wool. The cap has the local

name Tuscheti Nabadi Khudi. It stands out because of its shape that looks like four houses standing next to each other. The basic part is a flat, ready-made piece of felt which is as long as the circumference of a man's head. The cap is so high that the edge can be turned over, so the forehead is well protected against the cold.

↯ These long strips are sewn together to form a hollow body. The triangles pointing above are sewn together with a decorative stitch. The tip of the cap is further decorated by a button or a piece of felt.

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

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CH-4421 St. Pantaleon · Suisse

Tel. (0041) 619131333

www.atelier-pecora.ch · atelier-pecora@gmx.ch

Your direct contact to the editorial department:

redaktion@filzfun.de;

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