

FELT MATTERS

ISSUE 147 - JUNE 2022



FM 147 - SHAPE, FORM & STRUCTURE



FROM THE EDITOR

Hello. Through the open windows opposite my desk, I look onto a beautiful, warm, autumnal day. Whilst in Queensland (Australia) we don't get the definite change in seasons that I enjoyed in the UK, we do experience dramatic changes of temperature, especially in the rural areas of our district. Evening skies are very dramatic in autumn, with crystal clear, cloudless nights. The Milky Way looks so close you feel as if you could reach out and touch the Southern Cross.

My husband and I have moved to a rural town called Boonah, south of Brisbane, with a population of three and a half thousand people. Yesterday, a very kind neighbour dropped by with a welcome gift of half a home grown pumpkin which I will transform into a delicious soup this afternoon. My new friend saw Issue FM146 on our kitchen bench and was most interested; the front cover caught her eye and, having lived on a sheep

farm, she thought the image of Ellie Langley hugging her sheep rather moving. Over a cup of tea, she mentioned that there are several professional felt makers in our region. I lent her the journal to read, and suggested that perhaps she could introduce me to these feltmakers as they may already be members of the IFA, or be interested in learning more about the Association.

To all those who have contributed to this issue of Felt Matters, we extend a warm thank you. The articles relating to the theme are distinctly different, which adds variety to the content. We appreciate receiving two technique articles which offer practical skills that will appeal to both experienced and novice feltmakers. With the theme for FM 148 being Education and Technique, I am hopeful that tutors and more experienced feltmakers will be keen to share their skills, with a focus on producing a more technical and practical resource.

It is encouraging to read in Margaret Chalmers financial report that our membership is growing; may this continue. One positive result of Covid has been that tutors, makers and groups have had to communicate via the IFA website, Zoom and other forms of social media, with a direct positive result of

feltmaking attracting a wider international audience.

To be considered for selection in Exhibitions or Members' News, or to contribute an article in FM, contact Janine Rees at feltmatters@feltmakers.com. The deadline is three months before the publication date. Theme for FM148 September issue is Education and Techniques, and FM149 December issue is Traditional Felts.

Warm regards
Joan

PS: Don't forget to check the blog section on our website, where you can find previous techniques articles.

Please check the back of your carrier sheet for last minute additional IFA news.

*Additional copies of Felt Matters may be purchased from the IFA shop on the website.

W: www.feltmakers.com

NB: When sending copy and images to the Editor, the Dropbox email is editorfeltmatters@gmail.com

ADVERTISING RATES

To place an advertisement in Felt Matters please email: advertising@feltmakers.com

Adverts must be supplied as print quality (300dpi CMYK) PDFs or JPEGs. Copy dates are: 10th January, 10th April, 10th July, 10th October.

Display advertising rates are:

- 1/4 page 85X124mm (1004x1453 pixels): £280 for series of four or £90 for single ad
- 1/2 page 180X125mm (2126x1476 pixels): £420 for series of four or £130 for single ad
- Full page: £660 for series of four or £210 for single ad
- Full page back or inside cover: £820 for series of four or £260 for single ad

All display advertisers receive a complimentary copy of Felt Matter.

CLASSIFIEDS

To advertise, contact: advertising@feltmakers.com. It's only £5 for 30 words for IFA members and £10 for non-members.

WORDS FROM YOUR CHAIR - MANDY NASH



FROM THE CHAIR

The sun always seems to be shining when I write these words, so that must reflect on my role as chair of the IFA. I have now completed my first year - another busy one - and with the support of the hard-working committee, we have achieved a tremendous amount in developing the association, endeavouring to make it truly international. The Discovering Feltmaking courses are going well, with new ones being launched as I write. I do recommend that you take a look at these, even if you have been feltmaking for a number of years: there is always something new to learn and ways to improve your feltmaking skills. The website continues to develop and evolve (an excellent effort by our Communications Officer, Heather Potten), and with the addition of the Archive of all the Journals, Echoes and Felt Matters, a longterm project has now been achieved.

We held our third online AGM in March, and it was delightful to see so many members from around the globe, some making the effort either to get up really early or delay their bedtime to participate. Links to recordings of the talks by Wendy Bailye and Pat Spark, the AGM itself, plus my explanation on how to find the wealth of information on the website can all be found on the website. The third IFA online exhibition, 'Flora and Fauna', was also launched at the AGM, and many of you submitted an image; it is fascinating to see the diverse ways the theme was interpreted and the variety of feltmaking techniques employed. And don't forget to watch the commissioned videos (links can

be found on the website):

- Eco Worrier | A tutorial in Needle Felting by the Woolly Felters
- Wet Felting Sampling For Success by Dawn Edwards and Marie Spaulding
- Shrinkage in Feltmaking by Flora Carlisle-Kovacs.

At last, I am relieved to report that the list of books on feltmaking has been uploaded to the website under the Education tab. This has been a joint effort of IFA Regional Coordinators working to compile a spreadsheet of books on felt. I must thank Emma Jackson, Sheila Smith, Hélène Dooley, Sarah Waters, Nicki Parsons, Natalie Lyons, Janine Rees, Sandra Barrett and Margaret Chalmers for their hard work. Due to its nature, the list will never be complete, so it is now over to you, our members, to keep the list up to date. There are full instructions on how to do this on the website, along with a form to complete for changes and additions.

I must thank Sandra Barrett again; she has retired as our country representative for Canada, after working in the role for many years. I know she will continue to support the IFA and participate in our activities.

Sheila Smith has retired as our President. She will be a hard act to follow, and I will miss her support. She took on the role wholeheartedly, playing an active part in our committee and contributing to the majority of our lockdown projects. The committee will be meeting with her in August to offer thanks in person. We will not rush to find a new President, and we will consult with you, our members, in due course, to decide how to approach this.

We have made the position of Felt Matters Editorial Officer a committee role now. Although Janine Rees has been fulfilling the task for many years as a coordinator (and she has been on the committee in the

past as Publicity Officer), it feels right that she is now an official committee member. We have recruited two new members to the Felt Matters Editorial Committee - Nadia Rein and Carol Cohen - who we believe will bring fresh ideas and an international approach to the journal.

More good news! Our book publisher, Crowood, has informed us that the 'British Wool for Feltmaking' book has sold over 450 copies in the three months since it was published; they normally expect to sell that number in a year!

During the coming months, we would like to develop new ideas for projects. We are organising a new felt swap in 2022, and you can read more about this on page 20 of this issue. We are also going to plan a new international exhibition in 2023 (both online and live, if possible), and are working on participating in the National Wool Days in Felletin, France in 2023, in addition to exploring other ways to connect our members.

If you have any ideas for projects, do get in touch. Even better, if you would like to help in organising an event or project, you are more than welcome. We are always interested in hearing from members who would like to join our committee. Keep on felting everyone!

With all good wishes,
Mandy

international
felt
makers
association



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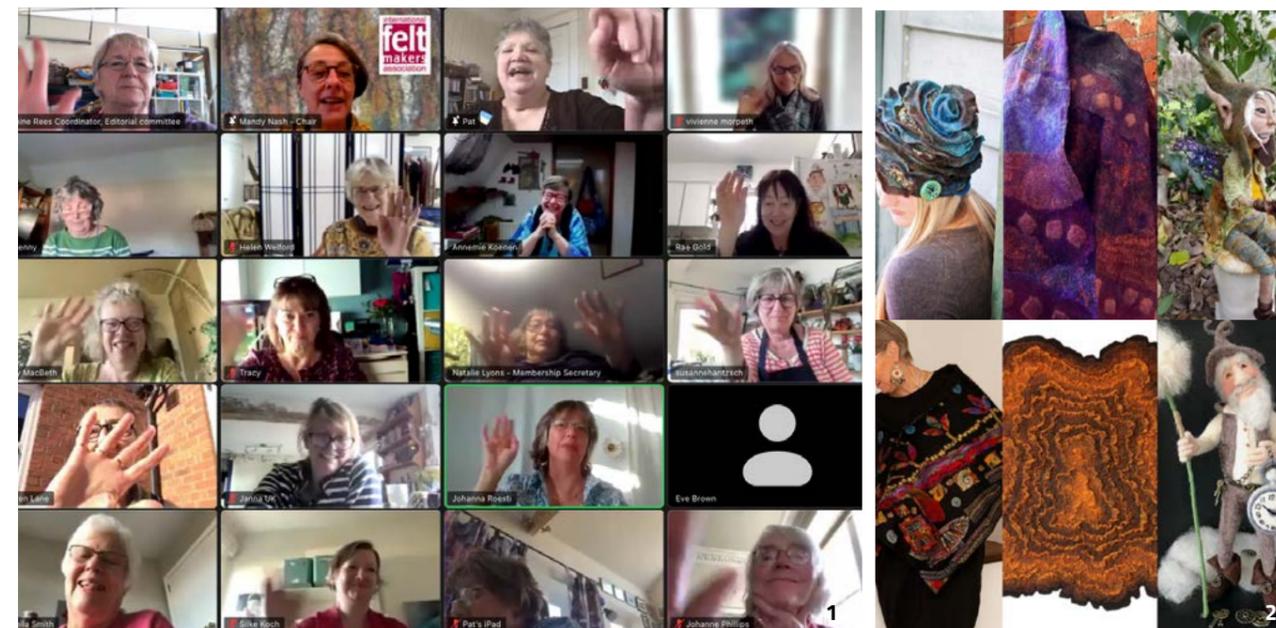
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MARCH - BELINDA DELANY AGM REPORT



ON 26TH MARCH 2022, WE HELD OUR THIRD ZOOM AGM.

The theme for the day was "Let's Get Technical", and alongside the essential business of the AGM, we enjoyed two very different but equally informative talks by Wendy Bailye and Pat Spark. Wendy, an Australian feltmaker, spoke about how to develop our personal creativity to make our felt unique. She suggested that to find our own creative voice, we need to connect, experiment, invent and create; to allow ourselves to play and to try something new rather than copying other makers. We can do this by starting from our own experience, and closely observing our surroundings. Joining courses with other feltmakers can help to develop our artistic skills. She suggested that rather than making one piece, we make a series or multiple variations. On the other hand, limiting ourselves to one colour, for example, can also help with the creative process. I left this talk inspired to put some of Wendy's ideas into action.

Mandy Nash then gave a presentation on how to get the best out of our website. She encouraged members to upload their profile to the gallery, and update it regularly. Members can upload their stories to the Blog, and add details of their events to the Events page. The latest addition to the website is an archive of all the past editions of Echoes and Felt Matters, which can be read like a magazine. Another new addition is the book list, located in the Education section. Our Flora and Fauna exhibition was launched during the day, and is available to view on our website, along with our other exhibitions. There are some beautiful and varied pieces of work, and it is interesting to see all the different interpretations of the theme.

After the formal business of the AGM, we heard from Pat Spark from the USA, who spoke about how to make felt as you get older. She uses different techniques to make it easier on the ageing body, such as laying out the fibres on pieces of paper, dry felting them by gently vibrating them with your hands and then sliding them on to your table, thus saving your back. She pulls out the fibres

using a card to hold the ends in place, thus putting less strain on the hands. Pat uses a variety of tools such as a palm wash board and a sander, and sometimes rolls her work up in a towel and puts it in a cool tumble dryer instead of rolling it. The height of her table is raised with risers to protect her back. Her final message was; don't just use one technique but change from one to another, take regular breaks, stretch in between and enjoy regular tea breaks!

This concluded another thought-provoking AGM. As well as these informative talks, there are three new videos available for members to watch on our YouTube channel, with lots of inspiration for our feltmaking. Enjoy!

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IMAGES
1) Screenshot of March 2022 Zoom AGM (credit: Janine Rees)
2) IFA website image of the work by contributors to the AGM.

TREASURER'S REPORT 2022

The audited accounts for the year ending 31.1.2022 were presented at the AGM, and will be submitted to Companies House in due course.

As the Association continues to evolve, notwithstanding the pandemic, our income and pattern of expenditure is also changing. The main source of income is from membership subscriptions; we have had a significant increase in members over the year - many from outside the UK, which is especially welcome. Our biggest expense is producing "Felt Matters" journal and, within that, the eye-watering postage costs - with, unfortunately, another postage increase from 1st April, 2022!

After investment last year, the expanded website is now an amazing resource for our members, with additions such as the digitised Archive of "Felt Matters" and "Echoes", Exhibitions, the Book List, Events and more. Mandy Nash gave us a timely presentation at the AGM on how best to negotiate all the website content.

I can be contacted via the email address below with any questions you may have regarding the accounts.

Margaret Chalmers
IFA Treasurer

CONTACT DETAILS
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International Feltmakers Association
Statement of Accounts for 1 February 2021 to 31 January 2022

	2021-2022 GBP	2021-2022 USD	2020-2021 GBP	2020-2021 USD	2019-2020 GBP (No USD)
INCOME					
Membership Subscriptions	66,397.74	-	46,086.99	-	50,689.41
Felt Matters Sales	2,144.25	-	2,330.64	-	1,827.35
Felt Matters Advertising	2,769.30	-	2,305.42	-	2,540.00
AGM 2019	-	-	-	-	30.00
AGM 2020	-	-	1,818.00	-	1,378.47
AGM 2021	-	-	-	-	-
Online education/ Gift DF	1,030.55	2,352.41	545.96	1,398.07	529.90
Fibres	391.26	-	213.92	-	-
Badges	58.85	-	42.57	-	97.80
International Workshops	-	-	-	-	4,279.92
British Wool Book	750.00	-	250.00	-	-
Interest	23.98	-	40.94	-	734.32
Publishers Licence fee	-	-	24.80	-	-
Catalogue sales	-	-	-	-	75.36
Website image gallery	-	-	-	-	-
Refunds	-	-	1,030.14	-	-
Miscellaneous/other	28.92	-	9.41	-	1,330.70
TOTAL	73,594.85	2,352.41	54,698.79	1,398.07	63,513.23
EXPENDITURE					
Felt Matters Production	30,950.14	-	18,819.02	-	18,752.25
Felt Matters Postage	-	-	9,016.00	-	8,112.19
AGM 2019	-	-	-	-	4,155.88
AGM 2020	-	-	2,000.00	-	1,041.00
AGM 2021	5,013.73	-	-	-	-
AGM 2022	250.00	-	-	-	-
Committee Expenses to run IFA	6,138.26	-	215.18	-	2,191.73
Postage Shop	-	-	845.41	-	511.78
Stationery photocopying	-	-	21.29	-	-
Regional Coordinators 2019	-	-	-	-	579.00
Regional Coordinators 2020	-	-	2,159.84	-	2,050.74
Regional Coordinators 2021 (CiFT)	25.00	-	-	-	-
Publicity	87.90	-	397.28	-	-
(Insurance)	-	-	5,308.60	-	5,300.20
Exhibitions	-	-	10.00	-	3,457.24
Shows/ Outreach	-	-	189.28	-	-
Website	2,260.02	-	4,228.55	-	1,769.86
International Workshop	-	-	127.00	-	4,279.91
Education	2,675.34	929.00	1,320.59	-	2,437.33
Refunds	338.56	-	416.39	64.00	409.72
(Appreciation)	-	-	1,117.63	-	-
(IFA own subs)	-	-	244.26	-	-
Archive project	3,042.06	-	70.56	-	-
British Wool Book	755.19	-	-	-	-
Miscellaneous/ other	-	-	325.70	-	1,734.21
TOTAL	£51,536.20	929.00	46,832.58	64.00	56,831.34
RESULT FOR THE PERIOD	22,058.65	1,423.41	7,866.26	1,334.07	6,681.89

Opening balance all GBP accounts 01-Feb-21		
Metrobank Community		9,640.75
Metrobank Instant Access		36,245.26
Paypal		67,176.94
		113,062.95
Result for the period		
		22,058.65
Closing balance all GBP accounts 31-Jan-22		
Metrobank Community		20,295.89
Metrobank Instant Access		50,269.24
Paypal		64,556.47
		135,121.60

Opening balance USD account 01-Feb-21		
Paypal		1,334.07
		1,334.07
Result for the period		
		1,423.41
Closing balance USD accounts 31-Jan-22		
Paypal		
		2,757.48

Accounts checked and audited on 23rd March 2022 by Jessica Watson-Glass ACA



EDUCATION - PIPPA WOODHAMS

CiFT MODULE 2: SEAMLESS FELT AND HOLLOW FORMS

IN TEN YEARS OF INTERMITTENT FELT MAKING, I HAVE ALWAYS BEEN FASCINATED BY 3-D FELT. I WATCH IN AWE AS OTHER MAKERS PRODUCE INCREASINGLY COMPLEX STRUCTURES, PURELY OUT OF THOSE ENTICING BUNDLES OF WOOL...



So CiFT, module 2, was an adventure: choosing to create a seamless vessel, a hat and a bag. I registered for CiFT in 2018 after

bereavement, as it gave me direction when I was low on creativity, and having a clear agenda enabled me to get felting again. Much of module 1 is routine and detailed and, as such, can be repetitive, so I made a conscious decision to spice up my records in a large sketch book, using one side of each page for exhibitions, observations and random thoughts, while the main page remained focused on the module. (Image 1) Accurate, systematic record keeping is not everyone's cup of tea, but I find a certain degree of obsessive satisfaction in it.

I would find CiFT impossible were it not for the amazing Region 10 group of competent Yorkshire felt makers and friends. For each stage, there has been someone from whom I could learn or receive a critique. Nicki Parsons (CiFT coordinator) has always been there with email encouragement when I get stuck, being clear and decisive when my standards don't match up to the level required. Although this is frustrating, I have to grit my teeth and admit that these are the stages when I have learnt the most, and get on with another attempt.

My first piece was a small vessel in Corriedale, with layered colours, cutouts from strips of resist and silk decoration, shaped by sculpting at a late stage in the process. (Image 2) This was not too challenging, and there is no minimum size for the work.

Making a hat was fun, being out of my comfort zone, and I relied on one of our region's hat makers, Jill Lauriston, for



teaching and guidance. I have a textured long coat bought in a charity shop which I used as a base for the hat's colour scheme. (Image 3)

In the absence of a taught course, the CiFT booklist is a basic resource, and I have found much that is needed in Christine White's "Uniquely Felt". Having made my vessel and hat, I then became stuck as I had no interest at all in bags. When Mandy Nash's book, "Making Felt Bags" came out, it was a prompt to get on with my last piece, a shoulder bag loosely based on one of her projects. This was the heaviest piece of felt I have made, and it took weeks, but gave me a great sense of achievement. (Image 4)

Keeping going with no deadlines is the hardest part of CiFT. The syllabus doesn't necessarily line up with one's interests and there are byways and juicy online courses to be seduced by. Looking back, I'm happy to have been directed into projects I would never have done otherwise, and I look forward to new challenges in nuno, ethnic felts and trimmings ... one day.

IMAGES

- 1) My CiFT sketchbook
- 2) Small Corriedale vessel
- 3) Merino cloche hat
- 4) Shetland and Jacob bag

PHOTO CREDIT PIPPA WOODHAMS

IFA REGION 1 DEVON & CORNWALL

BELINDA DELANY, HILARY NEWTON & ANNE WILLIAMS

REGION 1 COVERS BOTH THE COUNTIES OF DEVON AND CORNWALL.

Although one region, Devon and Cornwall are run separately, with Hilary Newton and Anne Williams acting as Regional Coordinators for Cornwall, while Belinda Delany is responsible for Devon. We both write monthly newsletters which go to the whole region to keep in touch with our members and inform them of meeting dates, workshops we are planning and IFA and local news of interest. Pre-pandemic, both counties were holding 2-4 weekend workshops per year, with invited national and international tutors.

Devon: During lockdown we held some meetings via Zoom, and these enabled us to keep in touch and discuss what we were making. We also ran a cobweb scarf workshop, which was taught by our member, Amanda Critchlow, and that worked well. **(Image 1)** Our first 'live' felting day was held recently, now that we're able to meet again face-to-face, and there are plans for more of these so we would like to make them a regular event.

In September 2021, we had an inspirational workshop with Vivienne Morpeth and Alun Kirby on cyanotype and nuno-felting. This was our first face-to-face workshop since the start of the pandemic, and it was very positive to be making felt again with other people after such a long gap. Everyone produced beautiful work, and we all learned new skills and techniques. **(Image 2)**

We will be running our first Summer School from 24th-26th June; this had originally been planned for 2020, but it was postponed twice! There will be lots of interesting stuff going on - indigo dyeing, felting a fleece, lampshades, nuno-felted bags, a fleece sale and a stash/de-stash sale, with lots more still being planned. All being well, we hope to be able to run face-to-face workshops later in the year.

Cornwall: We meet monthly on a Friday at Ladock Community Hall, just outside Truro. During lockdown, we held a few Zoom meetings, but the general consensus was that these online meetings were not the same as our face-to-face ones, and we were happy to be able to meet again at Ladock. Some of our members have contributed to the online IFA exhibitions, and we enjoyed discussing the videos from the 2021 AGM. We are a friendly group who appreciate getting together, and we welcome both beginners and experienced feltmakers.

We are now planning to take part in online workshops collectively using a projector in the hall where we meet. Two tutors have already been contacted; they are keen for us to purchase their online courses individually, while still learning together as a group! This will be a new and exciting shared experience for us all.

In 2019, we visited the Natural Fibre Company in Launceston, as well as enjoying Jo Downs' glass workshop, also in Launceston. We plan to work towards an exhibition and demonstration at the Natural Fibre Company in 2022, and are also going to exhibit and demonstrate at a local farm open day.

CONTACT DETAILS

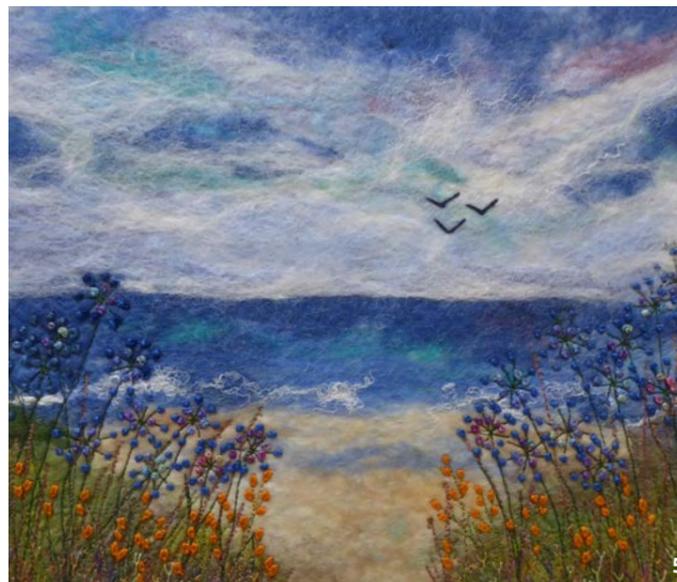
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IMAGES

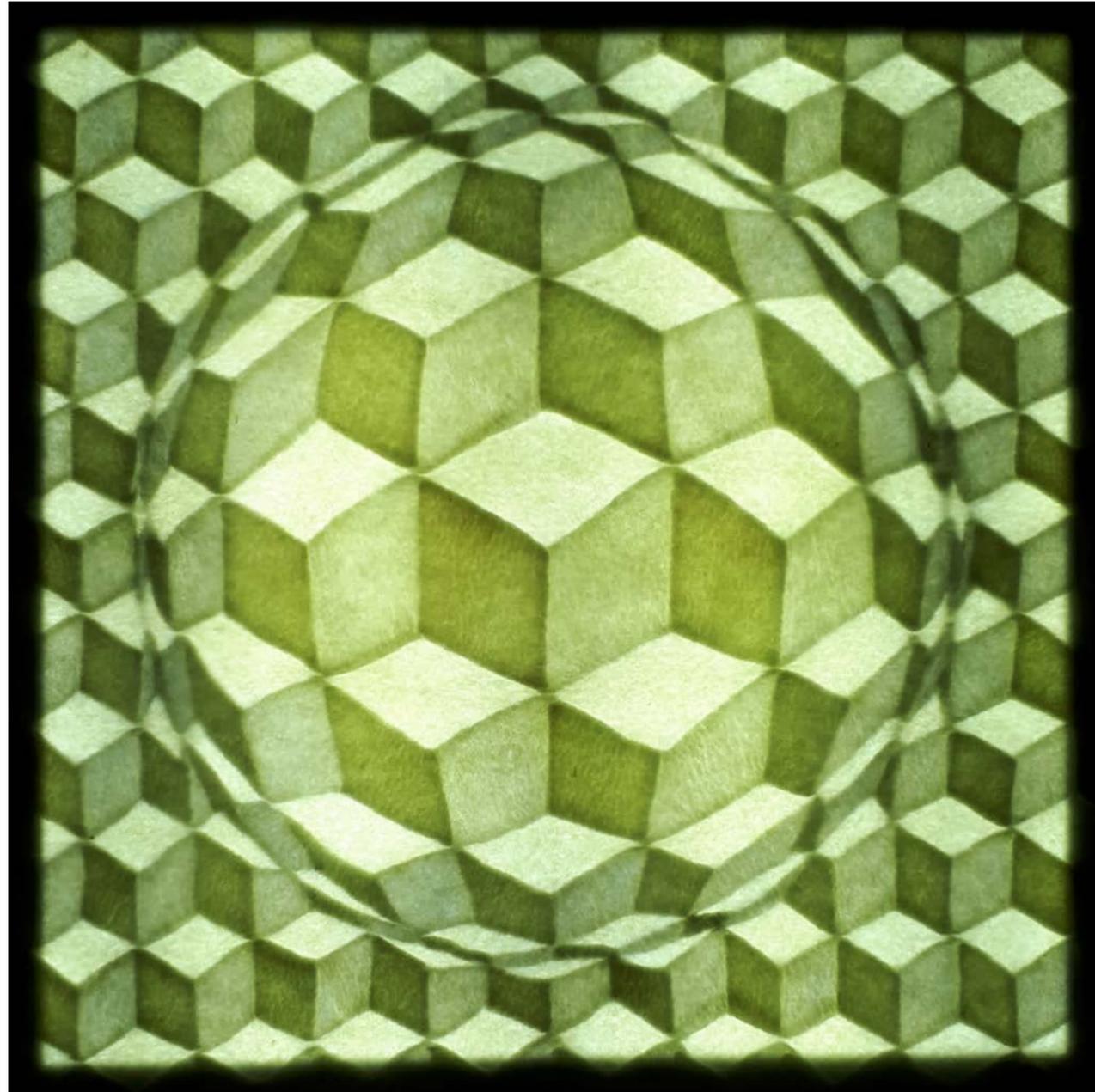
MAP – Credit www.visitnorthwest.com/counties/south-west-england

- 1) Cobweb Scarf**
photo credit: Debbie Barnett
- 2) Cyanotype workshop**
photo credit: Belinda Delany
- 3) Belinda Delany**
photo credit: Belinda Delany
- 4) Floribunda: Eileen Tragaskis**
- 5) Gwithian at Low Tide: Jill Rickard**
- 6) Ipad Cover: Lizzie Moore**



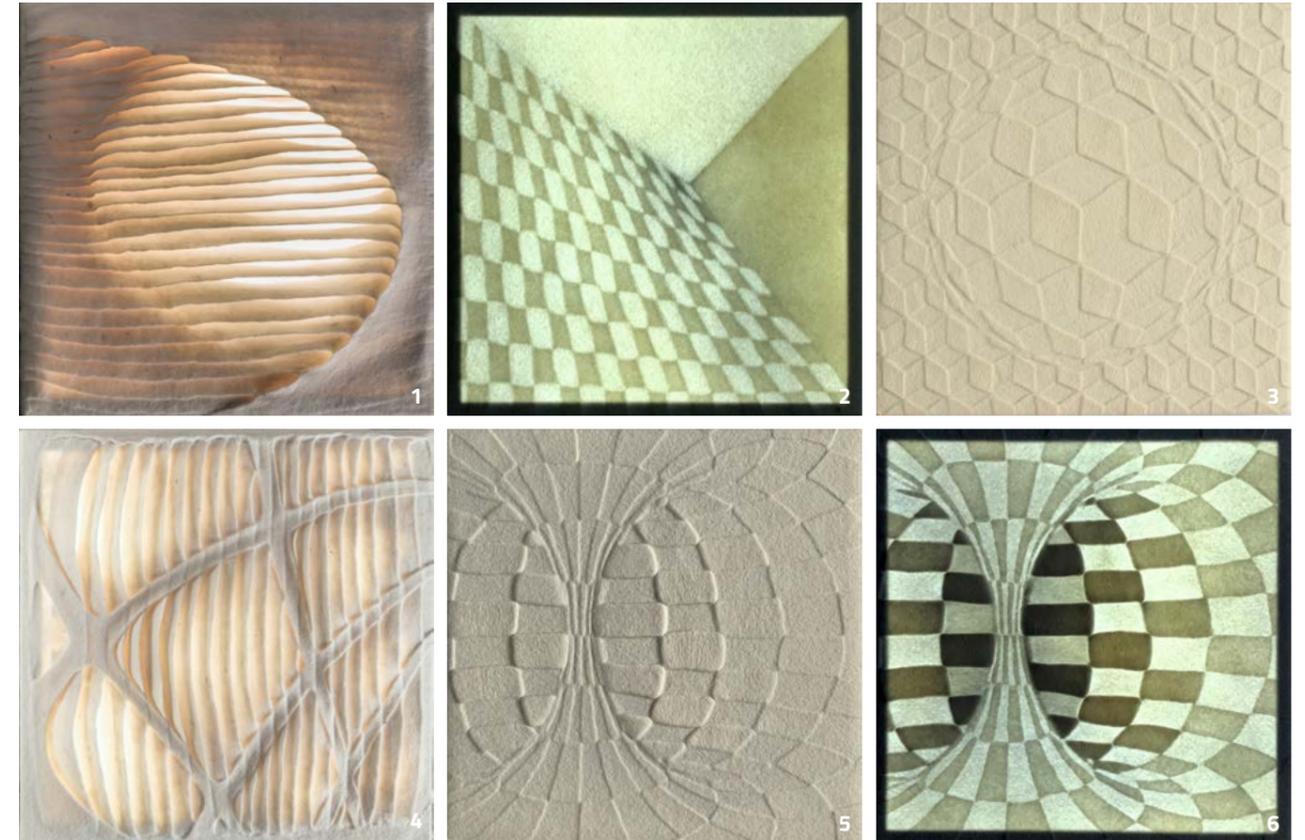
FOCUS ON CHARLOTTE SEHMISCH

- HENNY VAN TUSSENBROEK
IFA VICE CHAIR



CHARLOTTE SEHMISCH IS A GERMAN FELTMAKER AND TEACHER, LIVING IN WEIMAR, GERMANY. SHE HAS A BACKGROUND AS AN ARCHITECT AND COMPLETED A DEGREE IN FASHION DESIGN TOO. HER WORK IS EASILY RECOGNISED, WITH LAMELLAR ELEMENTS, FOLDS, CHAMBERS, SNAKES; EVERYTHING IS SEAMLESSLY FELTED.

WITH "STRUCTURE" AS THE THEME FOR FELT MATTERS, A FOCUS ON CHARLOTTE SEHMISCH JUST HAD TO BE INCLUDED.



I had the privilege of following several workshops run by Charlotte and, since then, am a great admirer of her and her work. Next to being an inventive feltmaker, Charlotte is a very kind teacher, willing to share all her knowledge. During one of her workshops, I called her 'Edward Scissorhands'. One of her techniques involves using multiple resists and cutting, so Charlotte immediately understood why.

I asked Charlotte how she got interested in feltmaking. She told me that when she was about five years old, she saw something on TV – an elderly Scandinavian woman making socks out of soaking wool, just using soap! Back then, she adored her two grannies for their immense needlepoint skills, and now that: socks without knitting or crochet? This image stuck, but she banished it to the kingdom of childish make-believe.

Twenty years later, a friend came by and proudly showed Charlotte her first self-felted house shoes. Charlotte was thunderstruck. So this thing was real, and it even had a name – felting! She urged her friend to give her her first (and only) felting lesson right away;

everything else came to Charlotte on its own, and at its own pace.

Charlotte's very first piece was a felted hat for her baby son. He looked like a Russian prince in it. Charlotte proceeded with making hats for years. She looked at people and imagined what type and shape of hat would fit them. Not being much of a hat person herself, she really enjoyed creating hats for other people, trying to underline their personalities. With garments later on, it was the same.

Inspiration to Charlotte is a strange thing to describe. For instance, she is quite fond of Sunny Side Up eggs (hasn't a clue why) and they've kept appearing in her work over the decades on quite a regular basis.

Being an architect by education, one urge, however, became constantly more prominent: Geometry and three dimensional surface structures. Eventually, hats and clothes became too small to fit with her geometric and structural theme, so Charlotte began to make wallhangings.

Twenty years ago, Charlotte ran her first workshop. Frieder Glatzer, from Filzrausch Germany, asked her to give a workshop on his premises. Charlotte remembers being

rather anxious beforehand. It was all quite improvised, but the workshop went well and Charlotte enjoyed it a lot. It turned out that improvising is something she is really good at, so she stuck to that principle, and kept her topics quite open. Charlotte thinks it's great to experiment and to try things people are interested in, in order to see where it goes.

Over the last two years, when Covid influenced our lives so much, Charlotte found sufficient space and time to intensify her feltmaking for LED panels, which she is currently obsessed with.

If you are interested in Charlotte's work, you can have a look at her book, called "Filz – Wenn die Hände wissen, was sie tun". It is out of print, but can be bought second hand.

In November 2022, Charlotte will be teaching live at Vrouw Wolle in Belgium.

CONTACT DETAILS
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IMAGES
Page 10) Supernova with Light.
1) Fokus. 2) Raumecke 11 with Light.
3) Supernova. 4) Pfade - Photo A. Burzik.
5) Torus 1. 6) Torus 1 with Light.



NEWS FROM CANADA - CHRIS LISZAK

HOW DID FELT :: FEUTRE CANADA MAKE THE SWITCH TO A GREATER ONLINE PRESENCE, AND CREATE A COMMUNITY OF FELTMAKERS FROM COAST TO COAST? TECHNOLOGY UNITES FELTMAKERS, AND EVERYONE GAINS FROM INTERACTING WITH EACH OTHER.

I took over the reins of felt :: feutre canada, along with three amazing volunteers, on January 1, 2021. Previous boards have primarily focused on live Symposiums but, with COVID canceling such activities, we hoped to create a larger online presence, and engage our members regularly through interactive events. We learned everything that made up the entity felt :: feutre canada and, after an early survey, we also learned what was important to our members.

With this information, we proceeded to start streamlining the website expenses, with the goal of switching to a new, easier-to-operate website, which launched in September 2021.

We embarked on our first intra-member challenge in February 2021. The Heart-to-Heart exchange was very well received and, using Facebook, we showed many of the amazing little "hearts" that flew around

I feel incredibly proud to be part of such a creative community

Canada. From there, we launched the bi-monthly "Members' Challenge", including a Zoom chat. By sending photos to the host, the gallery of images is shared via Zoom and each artist can speak about their work. This proved to be a great way to meet each other and learn about the techniques used in each piece. (Images 1, 2, 3)

We hosted very popular Art Talks, a series of interesting topics featuring members and their felt journey, with questions and discussions. Our first member teaching experience had member Joyce Brown teach us 'how to teach online.' This was something many members were keen to learn. We have since encouraged and supported more member-teaching-member events with two Workshop Grants awarded to members who will upgrade recording equipment, and present our members with online workshops in the fall of 2022.

Our Travelling Swatch Program is underway. The concept is to have a collection of square,

8 inch swatches showing varied techniques and fibres that will travel upon request of members to all parts of Canada. They can be a source of information and inspiration at regional meetings, fibre shows, or art centers. Our members happily created and donated these little treasures, and we have over forty already. (Image 4)

We have begun to explore the concept of regional groups. As we tentatively emerge from our lockdowns and restrictions, we will encourage retreats, workshops and gatherings in all areas of Canada. Our next national Symposium will be in the summer of 2023 or 2024.

We held our first-ever online workshop series in fall of 2021. Again, it was a complicated project tackled by all the Board executives. We discovered that it is an excellent way to allow everyone an opportunity to create from home, while sharing with our members nationwide. Using Eventbrite, Zoom and Vimeo, we learned how to host workshops. Our country is very large, with five and a half time zones. Even when we are free to meet in person, we will continue to offer online experiences so that we can reach everyone.

In 2022, we plan more member challenges, exchanges, art talks and social Zoom chats. "Pop Chats" are Zoom meetings offered with minimal notice (two to three days) and the discussion is informal. Our members, usually a small group, just get to know each other, and many discover tips and tricks about feltmaking while chatting.

Our online exhibition, "Make Me Laugh", is now featured on our website. It was a tough subject, but many answered the call and the collection will have you smiling, chuckling and laughing out loud. (Images 5,6,7,8)

In 2022, we launched our first Founder's Bursaries. Fiona Duthie, our founder and an inspirational Canadian feltmaker, has generously offered two educational bursaries for our members to be awarded each year.

Our goal of providing a steady supply of feltmaking entertainment and opportunities has been extremely well-received. Membership numbers are up, and the reactions and comments received in our first few months of leadership have been overwhelmingly positive, and all of us appreciate the vocal support. I feel incredibly

proud to be part of such a creative community – and part of the team that keeps it alive and viable.

Thanks go out to my partners in leadership, Sue Gardner, Gwen Kerr and Sandi Luck, Donna Bennet, Tina Sharapova and all the project volunteers.

Chris Liszak - President of felt :: feutre canada

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- IMAGES**
1. Bird Challenge: Debbie Katz
 2. Monochrome Beauty Challenge: Patti Cook
 3. Water Challenge: Nellie Fraser
 4. Swatch: Anna Armitage
 - 5-8. 'Make Me Laugh'
 5. Feeling Cheeky: Elise Campbell
 6. Rosy Rhinooster: Fay Hodson
 7. What Do You Call It?: Chris Liszak
 8. What's Really Behind The Mask?: Barb Mathieson
 9. Chris Liszak

WHO AM I?

My childhood homeland of Kazakhstan ensured my felting roots grew deep. It fully returned to my life during a time when I was struggling to accept the reality of losing one of the dearest people in my life. I tried different types of meditations, yoga, music etc but I could not switch off my mind. But then, I signed up for an online course of felting and was hooked. I loved the calming action of layering fibres, creating pre-felt. I was disappearing into the world of felt, fibres, colours, dreams, hopes, creativity and happiness.

I AM WOOL MAGICIAN ARTIST, DESIGNER, FELT MAKER AND TEACHER - NADIA REIN.



People often ask what I like most about felting. A difficult question. But if I am pushed, I guess it should be layering. The motion brings calmness. It's also when you start to interpret an idea into fluff ... before it turns into stuff.

After my dad passed away, I created a scarf from the pre-felt I'd made while he was ill. Layering wool helped me to switch off and get grounded while he was slipping away. The scarf is a precious item in my wardrobe. I love to wear it and, in a strange way, it generates all the good energy and good memories. I love when my work brings happiness.

I take my inspiration from people, traditions and nature and I love collaborations. In fact, I see every commission as a collaboration, and feel honoured to be trusted to realise someone's dream, or interpret their ideas. But it is important for me to be part of the project at the same time. To express your dream in my own words.



I use different techniques in felting and love to share them in my face-to-face and online workshops. A couple of my favourites are nuno and working with fleece. Using plant fibres in my work allows me to create heavenly textures, qualities and colour combinations.

Being born and raised in Kazakhstan, the land of contrasts and steppe, I am in love with stories of the country and practicality of its décor, especially its tradition of decorating the walls of houses with hanging rugs of intricate patterns. My own wall art/murals often resemble the pastel colours of my childhood; the landscape or brightness of colours of those traditional patterns. Woollen murals and wall hangings also have the benefit of adding amazing insulation and the warm cosy material gives your home a unique personality.

Traditional patterns from various cultures travel to my work quite often and help me to tell stories of people and places I visit. Although my favourite tools are good soap and my own hands, when felting large pieces, I also use specialist equipment, plus

a wide-range of household items such as an electric sanding machine, ribbed plastic washing detergent lids and even rolled insulation designed for water pipes.

My felting room is full of materials which allow me to come in from a walk, go straight to my felting table and start creating while still smelling my inspiration. On the other hand, as there is a huge demand on my time (kids, job, family, community...), I need to be very organised.

On large-scale projects, I break down the frightening enormity of it into digestible bits with research, design, templates, layering on paper, making fibre paper or prefelts. Doing nice little projects in between, or even parallel, to a larger one can help, as they can give a quick sense of achievement.

Then when everything is in place, my hands know what my heart wants them to do, and I dance my way through.

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IMAGES

Profile Picture) Nadia pictured in the scarf she made from prefelt while her father, Vladimir, was ill.

Page 14) A fleece jacket and hat. Locally sourced fleeces and natural brown wool. Photo by Malcolm Heaven.

1) A wedding dress made using different silk fibres, naturally dyed silk and white extra fine wool. Photo Nadia Rein Design.

2) Landscape wall panel made using locally sourced fleeces, different types of wool and silk and recycled material remnants. Photo by Malcolm Heaven.

3) Nuno felted wrap with Kazakh pattern. Photo Helen Keast Photography.

4) Nuno headband and ring flower felted in one of Nadia's workshops. Photo Nadia Rein Design.

5) Chickens from the collaboration with The City Farm Girl, USA, "When Feathers Come Together" as part of a global chicken collection. Photo The City Girl Farm.



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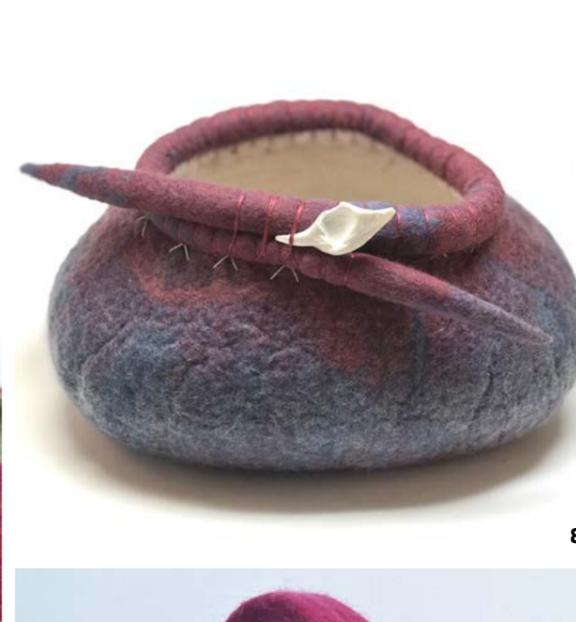
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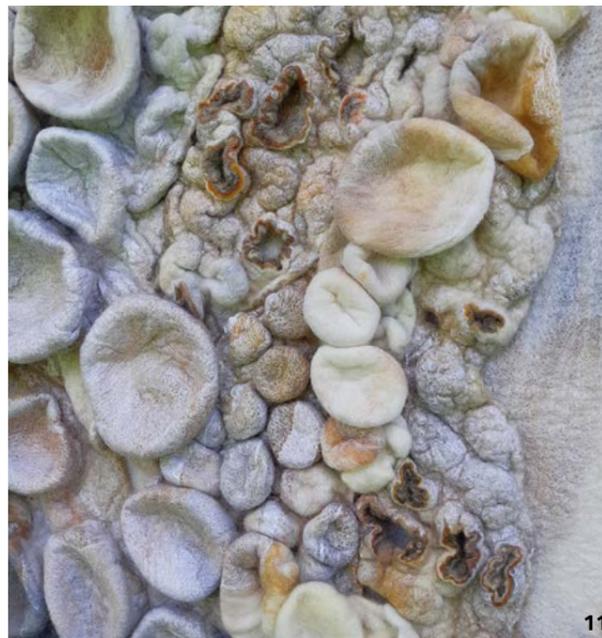
SHAPE, FORM, STRUCTURE

In the visual arts, shape is a flat, enclosed area of an artwork created through lines, textures, colours or an area enclosed by other shapes such as triangles, circles, and squares. Form can refer to a three-dimensional composition or object within a three-dimensional composition. Specifically, it is an enclosed space, the boundaries of which are defined by other elements of art. Shapes are limited to two dimensions of length and width. It is an artist's way of using elements of art, principles of design, and media. Form as an element of art is three-dimensional and encloses space. Like a shape, a form has length and width, but it also has depth. Forms are either geometric or free-form. Structure is something that is constructed (such as a building), or something arranged in a definite pattern or organisation.

IMAGES: 1) Carol Dash - Orange & Blue Bird. 2) Carol Dash - Orange Bird. 3) Connie Flynn - Hand Felted Stitched Pod. 4) Susanne Hantzsch - Lay Down, Breathe and Fly Away. 5) Susanne Hantzsch - Deconstructed Flower. 6) Silke Koch - Clown Peppo. 7) Connie Flynn - Plum & Maroon Felted Vessels. 8) She Mccaslin - Pink & Purple Vessel with Shell. 9) Reena Curphey - Detail of Textured 2022. 10) She Mccaslin - Turquoise Vessel with Stitch. 11) Reena Curphey - Detail of Embossing 2021. 12) Tricia Fowler - Doorstop.



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A DIALOGUE WITH WOOL - ESTHER GRISCHOTT

SEARCHING FOR THE PERFECT SHAPE. THE BEGINNING OF A NEW STORY, BUT WHAT HAS ALREADY BEEN EXPERIENCED?



Twenty-seven years ago, Esther Grischott discovered felting through Marlene Lang. Since then, she has been hooked on this craft, and has developed her skills through international education at the Maya Stenz felt training centre, and workshops organised by the Swiss Felt Association, Filzszene Schweiz (www.filzszene.ch). She has been a member since it was founded in 2002, and an active board member for over fourteen years.

years, I've never got bored with felting. More and more, I enjoy this wonderful textile craft", she says. "It's not enough for me to only make conventional or functional felt. I make slippers, bags, hats and garments, but my great passion is to explore the dialogue between artefacts and wool."

'As few as possible, and as much as required' is her guiding principle in the process of reaching an aesthetic balance. (Image 1) For her work with artefacts, she prefers natural-coloured wool from old country sheep breeds. Natural felt is diverse and inexhaustible in its possibilities and, in combination with the artefacts, gives the work a unique and strong expression.

Most of the artefacts are old farmer tools, driftwood and rusty finds. Some of the finds have been in her work space for months or years. "I let them affect me first, holding them, turning them around, putting them back, making sketches on paper or only in my mind. I'm searching for the perfect shape and texture. Sometimes it is a long process, and sometimes a short one. But when the time is right, my head and hands know what to do," she says. "I revive the finds with a new, second life."

The complexity and interaction between object and wool is, for Esther, the most exciting and playful part of the work. It shouldn't appear artificial. One element should help the other to achieve a balanced whole. This synthesis often leads her to

poems, and mythical and ancient figures which give her names and stories for the new creatures. (Image 4)

The big technical challenge is always the attachment of the objects. (Image 2) How do I connect them in a professional way, without them looking shaky? Is it done small or large, cute or weird? For example, are the bizarre birds (Image 3) leaving the nest or frighteningly wild creatures created and now guarding the working space?

She would love to do the welding work herself, but it would be another big field of new techniques and possibilities ... maybe one day, who knows?

The passion to work with found objects was initiated by an exhibition of the "Filzszene Graubünden" in 2006. The theme was "Urig Naturig" (Originally Nature). During a walk to the waterfall above her village, she found

driftwood that looked like a duck (Image 6), and thus, her eyes are now trained to find further wooden pieces that look like bird bodies. This year, her main inspiration is nature.

I let them affect me first, holding them, turning them around, putting them back, making sketches on paper or only in my mind. I'm searching for the perfect shape and texture. Sometimes it is a long process, and sometimes a short one.

Through both the subsequent exhibition topics of the Swiss Felt Association and personal development, she has changed her focus to art using metal (Image 5) and farmers' artefacts. Her figures get their unique charisma and expressiveness precisely through the careful choice of shape, form and texture.

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IMAGES

- 1) "Uhu-Tauber" (Eagle Owl), inspired by Christian Morgenstern's poem, "Die Finger".
- 2) The challenge of bringing parts together.
- 3) Top right - "Sechs Elf", inspired by Christian Morgenstern's poem, "Die Finger". This is the finished bird from the process shown in Image 2.
- 4) "Braun Waldschrate": mythical creature, forest spirit, goblin.
- 5) "Hermit Crabs": from the exhibition, "Bewohnt" (Inhabited).
- 6) "Schwemme und Stockente": from the exhibition, "Urig Naturig". Breeding Time.

FELT CONNECTS

WE ARE GOING TO SWAP AGAIN!



HENNY VAN TUSSENBROEK - VICE CHAIR IFA

As in the last two years, the IFA will be organising another felt swap in 2022.

In the swap of 2021, pieces of felt related to the theme "Weave" were sent and received by more than 100 IFA feltmakers from all over the world.

Featured in this article are a few pictures of felt work that have been swapped. From what I've learned, participants in the 2021 swap really enjoyed it!

In 2022 the theme will be "Structure". This is how it works:

COMMITMENT

When you join the swap, you commit to make - with care and attention - a piece of felt, and send it in the month agreed upon beforehand. Whether experienced or less experienced, every IFA feltmaker can join in.

THE FELT

For practical reasons, we keep the minimum size of the felt to A5 (5.8 x 8.3 inches or 14.8 x 21 centimeters). Should you, however, want to make a bigger piece of felt, you are free to do so; some like to make a small piece of felt, while others prefer to work larger. We swap just for fun and you are free to make whatever you want...as long as you do not expect the other swapper to make and send something large as well. A5 is the minimum size, and the felt work needs to relate to the theme.

THEME

The theme for this year's swap is **Structure**. Feel free to interpret it in any way you like. You could, for example, make many different structures in felt, using one or more colours together.

JOIN

I need your permission to send your name, email address and home address to the

feltmaker you swap with. Should you not be able to send your felt in time, you need to contact your swap-partner. I am organising this swap, but cannot take responsibility for people not sending their felt in the month agreed upon.

To summarise: make a piece of felt, according to the theme. Send it to your swap-partner, and you will receive a piece of felt from them in return.

If you would like to join in, send me an email at vicechair@feltmakers.com

Please email me before 1st August 2022. The actual swapping will take place later this year.

IMAGES

- 1) Caprice Niccoli
- 2) Gabi Friedrich-Ritschery
- 3) Jan Hoyle. 4) Gerda Keereweer

EXPLORING NEW FORMS

KAREN THURMAN



HAVING GROWN UP IN THE PACIFIC NORTHWEST, I WAS INITIALLY INTRODUCED TO FELTING AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OREGON SCHOOL OF ART. I EVENTUALLY STUDIED TEXTILES AT THE UNIVERSITY OF RHODE ISLAND AND PHILADELPHIA COLLEGE OF TEXTILES WHERE I COMPLETED MY DEGREE. AFTER A NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE BAY AREA, I RETURNED TO PORTLAND, OREGON IN THE LATE '90s WHERE I CURRENTLY LIVE AND WORK.

Continued on page 22 >



I have been working in the textile arts for over thirty years, beginning with knitting and eventually moving to felt making. My initial felt works were primarily two-dimensional which allowed me to focus on exploring color and pattern, and to better understand and predict how felt behaves during the process of transforming fiber into felt. Eventually, I was drawn to creating three-dimensional

sculptures, and that is now my primary focus. Over the past few years, I have begun to explore new forms, integrating more structure and incorporating new surface techniques of ornamentation. (Image 2)

The shapes, colors, and textures that I use are drawn from my surroundings – both natural and human-made. I am influenced by exceptional design in varied mediums, often in the form of fashion, architecture, flowers and insects. My most direct inspiration comes from the apparent simplicity created by the complexity of nature. (Image 3)

One of my favorite things about creating with fiber and felt is that it is an extension of the natural world; I love the fact that the fiber is obtained from sheep and other beautiful

living beings such as alpaca and goats. It also fascinates me that I am using the same fundamental process that has been used for centuries, and that the textile produced has an ancient tradition in the creation of shelter and clothing, as well as art. Yet the process of making felt from fiber is still a little unpredictable, and the end result can be precarious and surprising. (Image 5)

I am constantly seeing random things around me turn into sculptural forms in my head.

I am constantly seeing random things around me turn into sculptural forms in my head. Colors typically come to me in the same way. Often I will see colors that have been randomly put side by side and I will notice that they work beautifully together. I prefer to work directly without any sketching or pre-planning, allowing the piece to emerge based on the image in my imagination. (Image on page 21)

Using wool that has been cleaned and either dyed or natural, I typically form my pieces into their shape using a core wool, either by needle felting it or wrapping it with yarn. Once the shape is formed, I apply detailed, graphic ornamentation in layers using dyed wool in a needle felting process. Sometimes I employ techniques to manipulate the surface to add unique textures. When the ornamentation is

complete, I sculpt the piece into its final form using a wet-felting process with water, soap, and agitation. (Image 1)

I love that there are seemingly endless possible shapes and forms. For me, color and form are where I thrive and am most content. My art is my clearest way to communicate – in the hope of adding a bit of lightness and whimsy to this troubling, somber world. It is my way of infusing joy and calm into the chaos. (Image 4)

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IMAGES

- Page 21) Title: Rooster and Shrimp
Photographer: Dan Kvitka
- 1) Title: Whoville
Photographer: Harold Oxley
- 2) Title: Granite
Photographer: Stephen Funk
- 3) Title: Sea Life
Photographer: Stephen Funk
- 4) Title: Curls
Photographer: Dan Kvitka
- 5) Title: Granite, Steer, and Mane
Photographer: Stephen Funk



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WEAVING FOR FELT

GERI FORKNER



WHENEVER I THINK I'VE MADE ONE OF EVERYTHING, FELTING CONTINUES TO PROVE ME WRONG. COMBINING COLOR AND TEXTURE IS PAINTING WITH WOOL AND CLOTH. SHAPING GARMENTS AND VESSELS BY SELECTIVE SHRINKING OR UTILIZING DIFFERENTIAL SHRINKAGE IS SCULPTURE.

Felting came as a natural progression in my love affair with all things fiber. Like many of us, my grandmother taught me to knit, crochet, and sew. In elementary school, we would have a day off to attend the county fair, and my mother would take us directly to the petting zoo where we would pet sheep. "This is where your blanket comes from" - I never forgot her telling us that. I couldn't imagine how that rough, smelly wool would turn into the blanket on my bed, and never imagined how the properties of wool would inform many years of fascination with wool and everything it can do.

More years ago than I'd like to admit, I did a piece in collaboration with an artist friend who wanted to embed rocks into felt. After months of research and experimentation with making heavyweight felt, I finally succeeded. When the project was completed, I decided to change direction and see what was the lightest weight of felt I could make. That began my exploration of nuno felting. In nuno felting, scarves can be sculpted by laying wool in different directions, and garments can be shaped, without darts, by shrinking

some areas more than others.

Lately, my explorations with weaving for felting have played a prominent role in my ever-expanding toolbox of techniques. I love weaving yarns in non-traditional ways and then watching the felting process as the fibers attach, distorting the patterns. (Image 1) The differential shrinkage between the heavier woven sections and the lighter shingled sections offers great potential for shaping vessels. As a teaching artist, I created a "Weaving for Felting" class. Even though the textures and color combinations are limitless, I'm always surprised by the creativity the process engenders.

In 2019, I was awarded a three-month residency at Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts in the mountains of east Tennessee as part of their Appalachian Craft and Culture Fellowship. I'd first taken a weaving class at Arrowmont after my freshman year at the University of Tennessee (which was so long ago that the school, founded in 1912, was still called by its original name, the Phi Beta Pi Phi Craft Workshop). Although I admire and

respect straight selvages and traditional patterning, weaving perfect yardage had never been my strong suit, and I hadn't thought of myself as a traditional Appalachian artist. However, the lure of a three-month residency at a beloved craft school was worth the risk of rejection, so I applied. When I was actually accepted into the program, I decided to concentrate on weaving some traditional patterns, and then using these as the base for nuno felting. Combining weaving and felting became the starting place for my residency. I had just taken a natural dye workshop so, armed with those yarns, an antique, overshot coverlet and merino fleece in all its glorious colors, I headed off to Arrowmont to see what would develop. The naturally dyed yarns were quite heavy, so the different shrinkage rates created endless opportunities to sculpt.

Arrowmont teaches a number of traditional crafts. During my stay, I was fascinated by the shapes created in the clay classes, using slabs of clay to create hand-built vessels.

I challenged myself to see if I could create vessels using heavyweight felt, the properties

Continued on page 26 >



of which seemed so similar to the clay slabs. (Images 2 A & B) Instead of using resists, I began by laying out flat rectangles, combining heavily woven sections with lighter shingled sections of merino wool. Once everything was stabilized, I connected the ends to make the vessel. (Images 3 & 4) The differential shrinkage between the sections allowed me to structure the vessels. (Image 5)

During the pandemic, I took lots of online felting classes. Although I'd been making vessels for many years, book resists and overlapping resists offered new opportunities to create shapes that can't be made with a single, flat resist. Class projects ranged from lightweight works to heavy pieces suitable for rugs. My knowledge base expanded, and confirmed that there is no bottom to felting!

On a tour to Hungary with Flóra Carlile-Kovács, I was inspired by a visit to the Zsolnay Ceramic Museum in Pecs. I couldn't take enough pictures of the elegant and

intricately-shaped vessels. Armed with all my new skills, I attempted to create vessels using the many photographs as starting points. (Image 6) Many of the things I do are ongoing projects, and I expect to continue along this path.

Recently, I was asked by the John C. Campbell Folk School to fill in for a teacher who had to cancel at the last minute. Although I've been making vessels for years, I'd never taught this skill as a week-long class. Making my own samples to fit the teacher's original class description, I found yet more ways to add structure to vessels. It's been a fascinating journey. I love passing on these hard-won skills in my classes, gaining energy from the smiles and enthusiasm generated by the students while working on their own creations.

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RESOURCES

Links to schools mentioned in the article:

- Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts: www.arrowmont.org
- John C Campbell Folk School: www.folkschool.org

IMAGES

- 1) Woven Nuno Scarf with mirror details; photo by artist
- 2A & 2 B) Clay bowls with felt vessels; 2A; photo by Robert Beaty
- 2B; photo by artist
- 3) Blue Vessel layout; photo by artist
- 4) - on page 24) Blue Vessel; photo by www.robertbatey.com
- 5) Group of Woven Felted Vessels; photo by www.robertbatey.com
- 6) Vessels inspired by Zsolnay Museum; photo by artist

SCHERK MINIMAL SURFACE - KATHY HOATH



My home is in London in the UK, and I have been felting as a hobby for about twelve years. Over the last two (COVID) years, I turned

to the internet for sources of inspiration, and found a world of beautiful mathematical shapes that offer the felter intriguing sculptural challenges. This article describes how to make a four-finned, seven-holed hanging spiral based on a Scherk Minimal Surface.

This is a fun way to practise the differential shrinkage technique, using the direction in which the wool is laid out and varying thicknesses of wool to create the spiral. The resist is flat and relatively simple, but you need some maths from your school days to work out the proportions in order to draw it (or you can just use the dimensions from this example).

MATERIALS & TOOLS (Image 1)

- 19 micron merino wool tops: 94g white; 18g graphite; 8g yellow

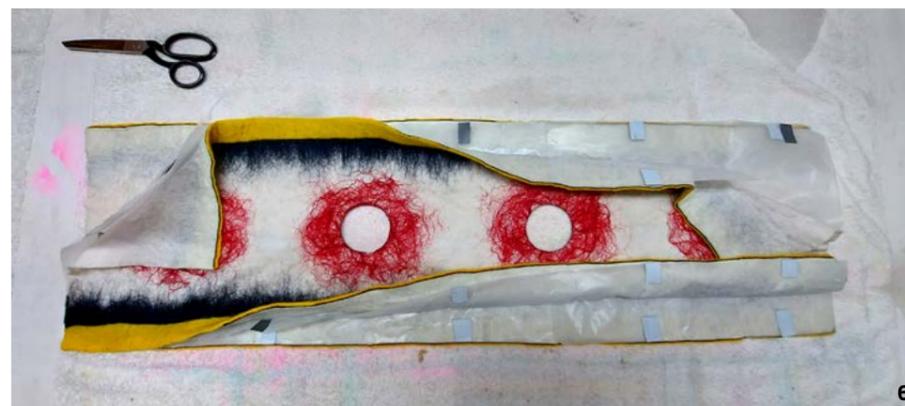
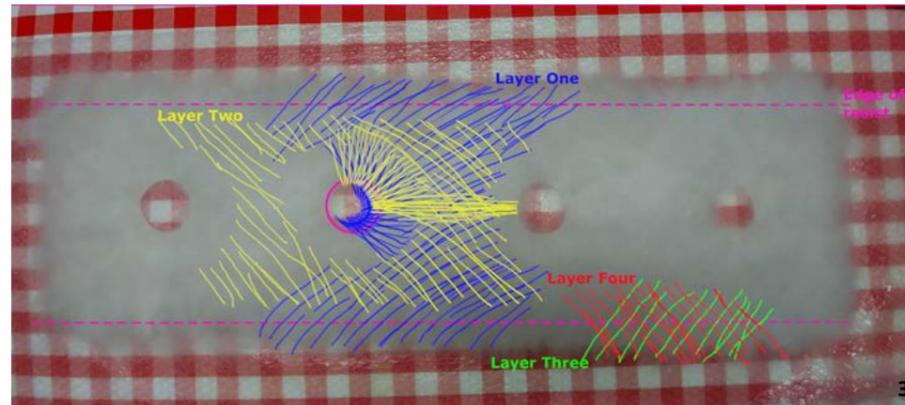
- Yellow needle-punch merino sheet: two strips 88cm x 5cm
- Red viscose fibres (optional)
- 100cm of clear nylon monofilament (either thin fishing line or a double strand of invisible sewing thread) to hang the spiral
- Needle with an eye big enough to take the nylon thread
- Two pieces of bubble wrap 120cm x 50cm
- Netting or mesh 100cm x 40cm (I use fly screen) to lay on the wool while you're wetting it out
- Lightweight builders' plastic dust sheet 100cm x 40cm (the highly flexible sort that has drape)
- Mediumweight builders' plastic 100cm x 60cm to use for the resist
- Sharp scissors
- Tape measure
- Drawing compasses to draw circles on the resist
- Calculator
- Permanent marker pen to draw the resist
- Duck tape

- Gloopy olive oil soap mix – see Tips
- Another bowl for soapy water
- Sprinkler for wetting out the wool with soapy water
- Towel
- Plastic drainpipe or pool noodle 100cm long
- Seven 10-12cm long pieces of thick foam pipe insulation tube
- Two bar clamps (at least 34cm long)

Step 1: CREATE THE RESIST

The layout has two types of holes: one is cut through the resist ("A" on Image 2), and these holes remain the same size on the finished felt as they are on the resist. The other set of holes is created by the wool wrapped around the resist in-between (around "B" on Image 2), and these holes will shrink. The finished circumference of both types of holes must be equal.

Decide the finished hole size and what shrinkage rate to use. This piece had a shrinkage rate of 40%, giving a resist factor "RF" of 1.67 (the resist is 1.67 times the finished size). **Continued on page 28 >**



The maths: $B = (A \times \pi \times "RF") \div 2$
 Here the diameter of type "A" holes is 6cm.
 So $B = (6 \times 3.142 \times 1.67) \div 2 = 15.7\text{cm}$ (16cm for simplicity).

This resist is 88cm by 26cm.
 Draw the resist on the medium weight plastic, and cut out two copies. Cut along line C from every hole through both copies. Turn one copy over so the cuts are on the opposite side, along line D. Now, one or other piece of plastic will support the wool all along its length but allow the resists to be pulled out easily later. Hold the resists together with duck tape.

Step 2: LAYER
 Place the resist on the bubble wrap and lay out two base layers:

Layer One, side one: use 19g of white wool and lay a very fine layer of slightly cross-hatched fibres around the holes with the fibres pointing inwards, but off-centre (blue on Image 3). Fill in the areas between the holes and along the edges of the resist with wool laid diagonally. Extend the wool 2-3cm beyond the edge of the resist. Place the mesh over the wool and wet it out thoroughly with

soapy water. Remove the mesh and cover with the second piece of bubble wrap. Flip the whole thing over. Remove the top bubble wrap to expose side two, and fold the wool that is extending from side one tightly over the edges of the resist.

Layer One, side two is laid out in the same way as side one, also extending the wool over the edges of the resist. Wet it out, but stay on that side.

Layer Two, side two: (yellow on Image 3) use 18g of the white wool. Lay the fibres around the holes at about 30° to the fibres on Layer One, pointing mainly towards the middle of the holes. The rest of the layer is perpendicular to Layer One. Layer Two ends shy of the edges. Finish Layer Two with an additional finger-width of fibres along the middle of the resist, connecting the holes. Wet it out, cover with bubble wrap, flip it over, uncover it and fold over the wool extending beyond the resist.

Lay out Layer Two, side one as for side two.

Step 3: THICKEN & SHRINKAGE
 Thicken the edges to reduce their shrinkage.

Use the remaining 20g of white wool to put two more layers 8-10cm wide along the edges of the resist (green and red on Image 3). On each layer, lay the wool half on side one and half overhanging the edge of the resist. Wet it out, cover it, flip it, uncover it, and fold the 4-5cm of excess wool down over the resist. Lay out all the grey and yellow top as shown in Image 4, half on the resist and half overhanging the edge. Wet out, cover, flip, uncover and fold over the excess. Finally wrap the edges with the strips of yellow needle-punch wool (Image 5). Embellish with viscose fibres [optional].

Step 4: PREFELT THE WOOL
 Cover the layout with the lightweight plastic. Lightly wet the plastic and soap your hands. Rub over the surface on each side for 5-10 minutes to create a skin on the wool. Sandwich the layout in bubble wrap, roll this around the plastic drainpipe, wrap in a towel and roll 50 times. Rotate it 90 degrees. Unwrap it, smooth out any kinks, re-cover and wrap it up again and roll 50 times. Do this in all four directions.

Step 5: CUT
 Cut a small opening into the wool at the edge

of the resist. Slip the scissors between the two layers of the resist and cut the sides and ends open (Image 6). Remove the resists.

Step 6: FELTING
 When felting, keep your hands very soapy throughout (see Tips).

Gently massage the wool directly with your hands on the fold around holes "A", alternating this with stretching it slightly. This removes the ridge and creates a tube. You may have to snip the viscose fibres carefully in places if they're stopping it from stretching. Next, roll the wool along the centre line between your hands (in the direction of B on Image 2) to start creating the second set of holes.

Work the edges: Rub and roll the fins from the edge towards the centre of the piece in order to narrow the fins but keep much of their length. The wool is much thicker on the edges so it won't shrink as much as in the centre. This helps to create the spiral. Once the felt starts firming up, alternately scrunch it in your hands, drop it on the worktop, stretch it and rub it to encourage the spiral shape to form. Continue fulling until both set of holes are the same diameter, and the fins are firm

and of an even width all along the length.

Step 7: RINSE & SHAPE
 Rinse and shape the felt. Fill each hole with a piece of pipe insulation. Fix the clamps to a table with tails upwards, far enough apart to hold the spiral in shape. Leave until dried. (Image 7)

Step 8: TO FINISH
 Stitch the nylon thread firmly into the top centre of the piece. Tie a loop at the other end at the desired length, hang it up and admire your handiwork.

TIPS
 Grate olive oil soap into a bowl; add just enough water to wet it all, and leave it overnight. Stir in more water until it has the consistency of treacle. Dip your fingers into this when you need soapy hands. Store with a lid on.

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PHOTO CREDIT – KATHY HOATH





HAT MAKER - ZSÓFIA MARX

...ON A MISSION TO DISCOVER POETIC SHAPES THAT STRIKE A CHORD WITH THEIR SIMPLICITY.

I am an Amsterdam-based felt maker, hat designer and online educator, and I've always been drawn to the 3D possibilities of felt making. Creating hats has taught me a lot about shapes and the amazing, sculptural potential of handmade felt.

Nearly two decades ago, when I was just a novice felt maker, I decided to travel to Turkey to meet with and learn from traditional felt masters. I was incredibly lucky to observe the making of the sikke, the high hat of the whirling dervishes. During this visit, I became fascinated with both the nomadic way of felt making and hat making. It changed the way I saw this material, as a form of textile. After a period of experimentation with different fibres and felting techniques, I learned to make felt that bears less resemblance to a textile, and has more of the characteristics of clay or a

sculptural material. (Image 1)

I sculpt the shape of my hats without the use of hat blocks, working only with my hands, and a few wooden instruments that I designed myself. I create my hat shapes just like a sculptor sculpts clay, and am constantly searching for new methods to

To me, this is the definition of slow fashion.

make felt suitable for my designs. I stretch, fold and "scrape" the surface of felt using my wooden tools to create the shape of my hats. When I imagine the 3D form of a hat, it feels like discovering a new landscape that is mysterious, free, and limitless. It invites us to explore, to investigate. The landscape of felt is constantly morphing in my head and under my hands, giving birth to new possibilities of valleys, creases, trenches and high plateaus.

I am continually on a mission to discover and create new shapes that are intriguing, and strike a chord with their simplicity. (Image 2)

Landscapes and nature inspire me the most. Ideas come to me when I am alone, and feel one with nature. It's not so much the physical beauty of the scenery that triggers my imagination; it is the fact that a part of it always stays hidden from the eye. There is mystery, and there is always more

to discover. Hats evoke similar feelings. They are extraordinary, alluring and captivating objects, and I want to explore and understand how certain shapes can evoke and amplify these feelings. My hats have neither front nor back; they appear very distinctive from each angle, and can be worn in many different ways. Some can even be re-shaped and re-folded (Image 3), and it is the wearer who has to discover which angle best suits her

personality, and amplifies her unique beauty. I love the fact that this requires a bit of self-discovery and soul-searching. To me, this is the definition of slow fashion.

When the pandemic hit the world, I started to teach online hat-making classes. I have always felt a strong longing to share my ideas and passion for this craft with others. Creativity and art are amplified when shared with others, and it has always been my dream to build an international community of students, artists and hat makers so that we can exchange ideas and inspire each other. Online teaching gave me the opportunity to start building such a community, and I am forever grateful to my students who believed in me and joined me on this journey.

Teaching hat making has required me to document and analyse my felting methods and shaping techniques. As I normally do everything by intuition, looking at my methods in an analytic and systematic way was, at first, very strange to me. This new, systematic approach brought fascinating insights and a deeper understanding of a craft I thought I knew from the inside out. It prompted me to dive into the study of wool

fibres in order to understand their unique characteristics and the purpose they serve during the felting process. I discovered that combining and mixing different types of fibres in different ratios produces very different results. The method of mixing fibres has a significant influence not only on the structure of the felt, but also on the possibilities of mixing colours to produce subtle colour transitions. (Image 6)

Last year, I was selected to participate in Masterly The Hague, an art and design biennale in the Netherlands. The participating artists and designers were commissioned to make new works inspired by 17th-century Dutch landscape painting. The key topic of the exhibition was 'An Ode to the Dutch Landscape', and it was a wonderful experience to delve into the art of landscape painting and try to see nature through the eyes of the 17th-century artist. The Dutch masters of that era had a unique appreciation of the poetic beauty of the landscape, and they were constantly seeking new methods to portray it. This reminded me of my passionate search for a felting technique that would help me express my new ideas. Felt is my canvas, and the landscape is the shape

I make. The subtle beauty of the paintings inspired me to refine and tone down my colours, and soften the lines and contours of my shapes. A new way of working with felt and a new collection of hats was born from this experimentation. The Masterly Collection is my ode to landscapes and the beauty of shapes. (Images 3,4,5 and page 30)

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IMAGES
Page 30) Group of hats at the exhibition
1) 'Erikah' – yellow, pleated hat
2) 'Oyster' – man's red hat
3) 'Amara' – orange hat from the Masterly Collection
4) 'Maia' – teal hat from the Masterly Collection
5) 'Eden' – green hat from the Masterly Collection
6) Photo of me

PHOTO CREDIT - Zsófia Marx



NEEDLEFELTED HEART SAMPLE

BY KIRSTEN HILL-NIXON - EDITED BY JANINE REES

A SIMPLE SHAPE, ENABLING YOU TO TRY THE SUITABILITY OF DIFFERENT WOOLS BEFORE YOU EMBARK UPON A LARGE-SCALE PROJECT WITH MORE TECHNICAL APPENDAGES.

I have used my rolled heart technique for teaching beginners and cataloguing my own wool samples, and also to sample wools for the "British Wool for Feltmaking" IFA book. This simple shape allows beginners to see how the wool is reacting to being needled, and gain confidence in preparing the rolled wool to make a good starting point, manipulating the needling to sculpt and change the shape and surface. More experienced felters will have a simple, repeatable shape to show how different wools react to needle felting. A quick and easy sample shape will mean that you can easily compare wools and needle sizes to see which wool suits you, as not all wools

give a pleasing result. This is a good point to make, because sometimes it's not you that's doing it wrong - it's just not a suitable wool for needle felting!

MATERIAL & TOOLS

- 38 gauge star felting needles
- Foam or felting brush surface to needlefelt on to
- Various wool tops, wool batts or washed fleece - if you have more experience, slightly coarser wools such as Jacob are better than merino; Portland, as used in this example, is my personal favourite
- You can use a thin section of cork to

make a simple needle holder: push the heads of two or three felting needle into a cork to make a tool for quicker felting

STEP 1

As a newcomer to needle felting, try using wool tops. Tear the tops along the lengths to form a section of wool half the usual width and weight, to produce a piece approx 12 inches long (30 cm) and 1-1.5 inches wide (2.5-4 cm). This part is more important than you think! Holding both ends of the wool with a little tension, start to roll from each end at the same time until the rolls meet in the middle.

STEP 2

Now that the rolls have met in the middle, they form a natural cleavage at the top. If your heart is very tall and unruly, unroll it and maybe fold the wool in half along its length, rolling it up tightly again. It is important to have a tightly-rolled heart. If the wool is too soft and fluffy, you will spend a lot of time stabbing into fresh air, and the heart will flatten and collapse.

STEP 3

Hold your heart, with the spirals flat, on your felting surface. Using a set of two or three needles at a 90 degree angle to the wool, plunge the needles straight down into the top of the spirals - using the cork with 2 or 3 needles will compact the wool 2 or 3 times quicker! Taking care not to plunge the needles in so far that they come out the back, turn the heart over and work on the other spiral side. Turn over a few times and carry on stabbing. The wool will then start to compact.

STEP 4

Alternate stabbing into the spirals with stabbing into the sides. The wool will start holding its shape and firming up nicely. Remember: the more you stab one area, the

more it will compact, so be careful not to flatten your cleavage!

STEP 5

Using a single felting needle, work at an angle to make sure that the join between the spirals is firmly felted inside. You can push and squash with your fingers to make the bottom of the heart more pointed, and then follow that with needling. Remembering not to push the needles out of the back of the heart.

STEP 6

To soften the heart shape into a curved dome shape, work into the edges where the sides and the flat of the spirals meet. Work all the way around the edge on both surfaces, continuing until you are happy with the shape. The heart should now be half an inch deep (1.25 cm) - half of what it was when you started.

STEP 7

Nearing completion; you have been making a lot of deep needle stabs to establish a firm shape, and may be left with pin marks from working deeply at right angles to the work. To get rid of those pin marks and surface fluff,

use the single needle at a very shallow angle - almost flat to the surface of the wool - and stab all over the surface. This will not distort the finished shape of the sculpture, but will firm up the surface.

STEP 8

All finished! You should have a robust sculpture that will stand up to handling, and not pill on the surface in use. Try using random-dyed wools to give the hearts more of a swirl of colour.

TIPS

Pin a label onto each new trial heart to remember the type of wool and whether you liked using it. Did it give a good surface and a robust structure? Was it quick to compact? What size of needles did you use? etc.

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Editor's note - please remember, felting needles are extremely sharp, and any broken needles should be disposed of safely.

PHOTO CREDIT Kirsten Hill-Nixon

GIROTONDO

VIOLETTE AMENDOLA

WHERE I AM
WHERE ARE YOU
HERE
IS ALSO
THERE
WE ARE TURNING
CIRCULATION

- ROSE AUSLÄNDER



- CIRCLE, TO CIRCLE, TO TURN ROUND, A TURN, TURNED
- GIRO, ROTONDO, GIROTONDO, TORNIO, RITORNO, RITORNELL. TURN, RETURN.
- OVER AND OVER AGAIN YET DIFFERENT. A JOURNEY THROUGH LIFE - PERPETUUM MOBILE.
- THOSE WORDS ACCOMPANY ME IN MY WORK.
- IT ENCHANTS ME TO GIVE THESE WORDS A SHAPE MADE OF WOOL.



I live as a retired teacher and organist. In 2018, I was invited to teach felting both at home and abroad. In 2019, I had the chance

to organise a large exhibition of my work, together with other artists. Then CORONA came...again and again and yet different... GIROTONDO! Corona gave me a break, time for reflection and a retrospective pause.

A REVIEW OF MY FELT STORY

My first encounter with felt took place 23 years ago in a furniture store. Two felt necklaces by Karin Wagner were on display – two unique pieces, one in different shades of red, the other one in shades of blue. I entered the store where there was a customer who couldn't quite decide which of the two magnificent specimens to choose. Finally,

she bought both. Sadly, I left empty-handed. However, the disappointment quickly gave way to my decision to learn the craft of felting myself. With this impulse, I got into my personal felt story.

RECURRING TOPICS

I set up my studio in my laundry room, with a view of my textile and wool warehouse. Having the materials at hand and looking at them inspires me to get creative again and again. I need a variety of wools, from fine to coarse, in order to express different statements through my objects.

One topic sometimes stays with me for years. I experiment with different techniques, materials and colours, following a recurring and shimmering motif – similar to an « Ostinato», a constantly repeated tone sequence or a recurring rhythm in music. I

experience a rich, colourful palette of different emotions, from despair to exuberant joy and enthusiasm.

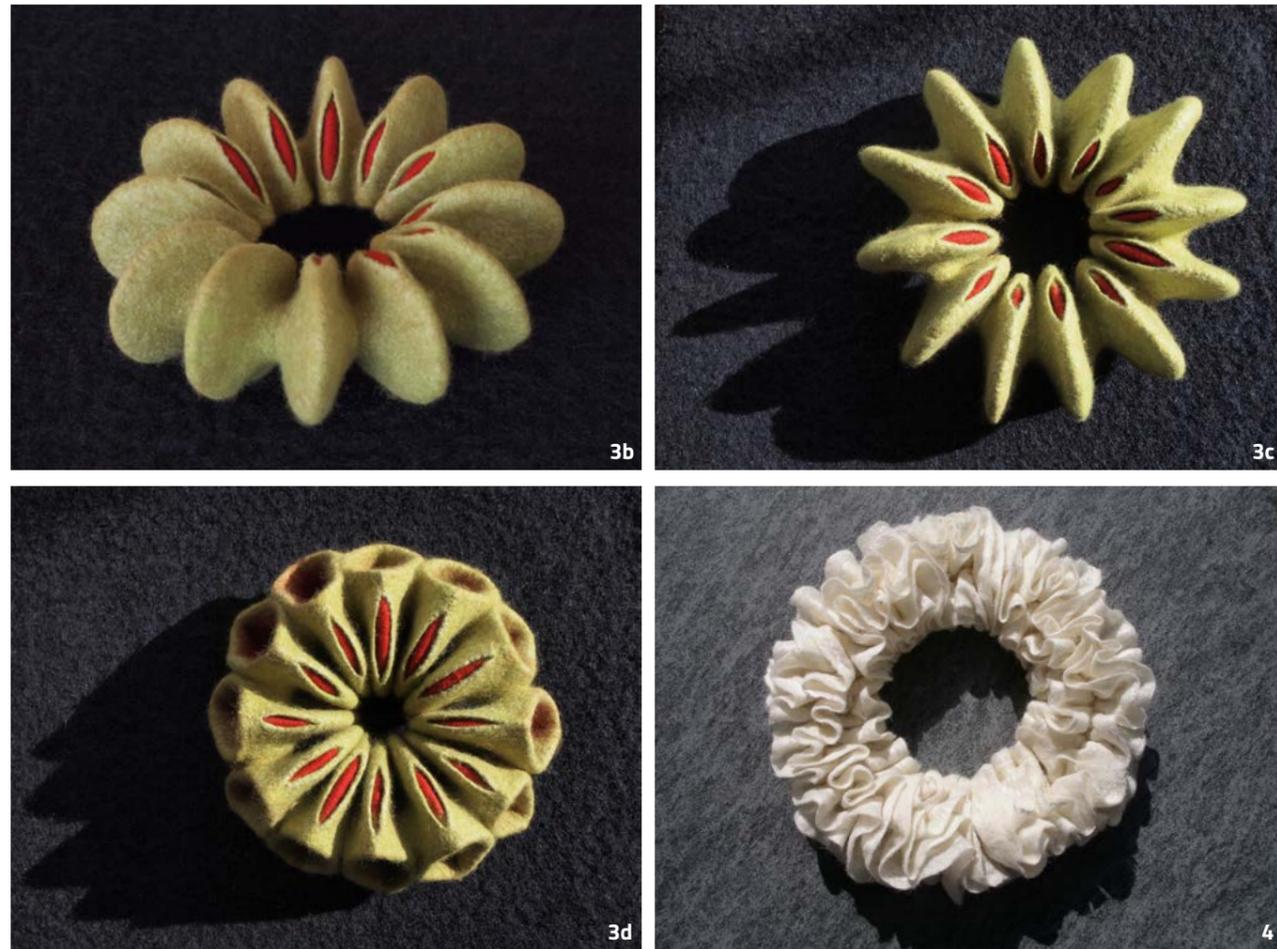
MUSIC AND CRAFTS

In addition to my professional work as a teacher, I was also an organist. Music is very precious and important to me. Music touches the moment you hear it and lingers on, but isn't tangible like handicrafts, even if sometimes I wish it were. The contrasts of fleetingness and down-to-earthness are very stimulating.

NATURE AS A SOURCE OF IDEAS

I often find inspiration for the shaping of my objects outdoors. A few years ago in Chartres for example, I discovered seed capsules of the Paulownia tree. Its bell-shaped flowers develop into beautiful four-chambered capsule fruits that inspired me

Continued on page 36 >



to create my « Departure » object (Image 1). «Departure» in turn gave me the push for the bumped and rotated GIROTONDO objects (Image 2). Everything is changing time and again, an expression of which are my «husk metamorphoses» (Image 3). They can be turned over at will and some of them are wearable as bracelets.

SOUL PICTURES – SOUL LANDSCAPES

My artistic felting has mainly been influenced by Claudia U. Gemein. I was lucky to follow several of her courses. In her work I find incredible strength, tranquility, calm and internalisation. I intend my work to radiate with security and tranquility to let the invisible become visible.

MUTUAL MOTIVATION

During the many years of my professional activity as a teacher, the wide range of possibilities in felting was a big help to me. The children’s enthusiasm infected and motivated me. Together with them, new and

unexpected perspectives opened up again and again. My artistic felt work is first and foremost born out of pleasure and joy and a wish for others to share this joy.

FELT CREATES CONNECTIONS

I’m thankful for all the inspiring connections and friendships that developed through felting – and new doors are still opening up. Meeting felt-creating women, being supported by so many people who share my enthusiasm: They all have an indelible room in my mind.

A big «Thank you» goes to Jürg Messerli who is my patient and sometimes critical companion and the photographer of my work.

TRUST

“Every morning, the bowl of our lives should be held up to receive, bear and give back in return”. *Dag Hammarskjöld.*

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IMAGES

- 1) AUFBRUCH Valaisan wool
- 2) GIROTONDO Valaisan wool/linen
- 2a) GIROTONDO Valaisan wool/linen
- 2b) GIROTONDO Angel’s wings Valaisan wool/linen
- 3 - on page 34) GIROTONDO Metamorphose Merino wool/silk
- 3a) GIROTONDO Metamorphose Merino wool/silk
- 3b) GIROTONDO Metamorphose Merino wool/silk
- 3c) GIROTONDO Metamorphose Merino wool/silk
- 3d) GIROTONDO Metamorphose Merino wool/silk
- 4) GIROTONDO Kranz Valaisan wool/silk

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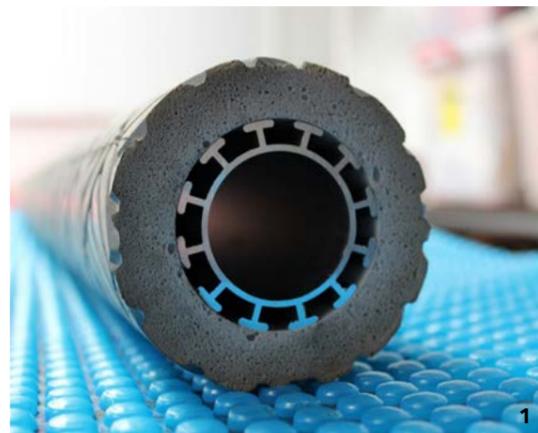
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GENTLY ROLLING ALONG



AS THE GENTLE ROLLER WET FELT ROLLING MACHINE CELEBRATES FIVE YEARS ITS POPULARITY CONTINUES TO GROW. IT MAY BE TIME YOU JOINED THE EVOLUTION.

In 2017 a fibre artist (Joni Cornell) and retired businessman (Philip Coates) got together and created The Gentle Roller - wet felt rolling and fulling machine; designed to remove the hard work of hand rolling felt and leave you free for other activities. The original design concept hasn't changed, although there have been constant developments. Some have been subtle molding changes, others more significant, such as the unique fulling drum, or the introduction of the soft drive roller for nuno felt makers

The 2022 version of the Gentle Roller sees the introduction of an exclusive design 'double wall' aluminium core into the drive roller. This move has been in response to the growing number of users who wish to

make heavier items such as fleece rugs. The aluminium core remains rigid even with the heaviest felting bundle, ensuring maximum felt contact and efficiency.

Many felt makers "make do" with adapting equipment like massage rollers, clothes dryer or sanders. These may give results, but they aren't always safe and don't give full control of your project. The Gentle Roller is a purpose-built, wet felt rolling machine. Designed to be safe, effective, efficient and affordable for the fibre artist or serious felting hobbyist. The use of soft polyurethane rollers, colourful powder-coated metal parts, anodized aluminium and stylish molded components means it looks good in your studio too.

The Gentle Roller is suitable for everything from lightweight felts, nuno felts, larger seamless wearable garments and accessories like slippers, bags and hats to wall hangings or intriguing 3D sculptures and art pieces. For more information, visit gentleroller.com.au

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IMAGES
 1) 'Double wall' aluminium core
 2) The Gentle Roller & Fulling Drum
 3) Joni Cornell



soybean tops



cashmere waste



eri silk tops

TRUE BEAUTY IS ECO-CONSCIOUS



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