

CHARLOTTE SEHMISCH, MASTER OF FELT ART

The report of an exhibition in her honour in Weimar, Germany

I had heard a lot about the German textile artist Charlotte Sehmisch. I knew a few people who had reported on her courses and proudly showed their beautiful objects. They were enthusiastic and talked about the complex technique. At some point, I also wanted to take a course with her. Unfortunately, it didn't happen. Charlotte Sehmisch died suddenly and unexpectedly in December 2024.

Charlotte Sehmisch's circle of friends organized an exhibition in the university library of the Bauhaus University in Weimar in honour of the "Master of Felt Art". Charlotte Sehmisch studied and later taught at the former University of Architecture and Civil Engineering in Weimar, Germany. She then concentrated on textiles and felt and became a fashion designer at the University of Art and Design Halle (Burg Giebichenstein). She last lived in Weimar. She became world-famous in felting circles for the unique reservation, plaice and lamella technique she developed and which she mastered like no other. Numerous pieces of her work and photos of her career are on display in Weimar until July 12, 2025 in the library on three floors.

Even the exhibition venue is special. The library building in Weimar was opened in 2005 on the site of a former brewery and even received the Thuringian State Prize for Architecture and Urban Design.

By using lots of wood, glass and plants, the building radiates an incredible sense of calm, concentration, openness and serenity. It is a peaceful place where Charlotte's works can be found. They harmonize perfectly with the atmosphere of this building. The large windows allow a perfect staging of light and shadow - exactly what Charlotte Sehmisch intended with her felt art.

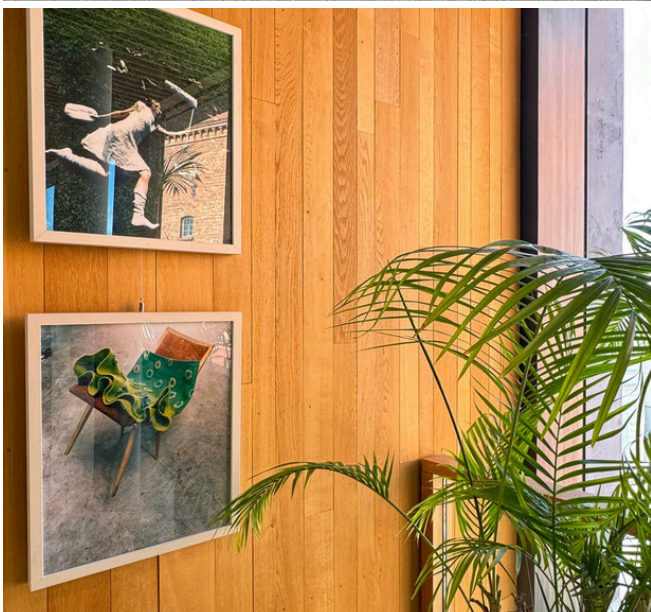
Her works are installed in the library in such a way that they can be viewed up close and from different angles. This is helpful to be able to marvel at the special technique and materials. Many different works have found their way to Weimar: Hats, bags, belts, items of clothing and murals.

Photos from various creative phases are also on display. These are accompanied by quotes, e.g. from Charlotte's book *Denn die Hände wissen, was sie tun*, published by Maro Verlag in 2010. In her book, she writes that she imitated geometric shapes through the techniques she developed. The properties of wool and other materials made her works natural and lively. This was also due to the incidence of light. Geometry demands perfection. Charlotte

Image 1 - the entrance of the university library in Weimar, Germany, with the exhibition poster

image 2 - the prize-winning building of the university library

image 3 - the interior of the library: a perfect combination of wood, glass and green. The photos show Charlotte's feltart.



was attracted to achieving this perfection with the help of wool, soap and water. Although it must have been a challenge to force a flexible material like wool into exact measurements and forms, there is no evidence that she made any compromises in her felt works of art. They are perfect and fascinating. Experts stand in awe and wonder how she went about it.

Her courses were in demand and popular. Because I did not know Charlotte Personals, I asked students and an organizer of her courses what Charlotte's workshops were like. All of them provided a statement and photos of Charlotte, participants and of the work created in the courses:

"Charlotte Sehmisch was an outstanding personality and a key figure in the international textile art scene. I consider myself lucky to have known her personally. One of the projects close to my heart was organizing workshops with international female artists in Vienna and the surrounding area. Charlotte was always at the top of my wish list - but reaching her was anything but easy. Her modesty and reserve were as legendary as her art: she never made a big fuss about herself; her contact details were hard to find on the internet and her website was rarely up to date. It was only through a lucky coincidence - arranged by an artist friend - that I finally got hold of her telephone number. Communication was slow at first and more than once I was tempted to give up. Fortunately, I didn't, because meeting Charlotte became a gift - for me and for many participants who took part in her courses and were able to benefit from her genius.

Charlotte was a generous communicator of knowledge: with patience, calmness and a remarkable composure, she stood by everyone, even when we were on the verge of despair. "You are out of this world", I often said to her in admiration, especially in view of her complex "cellular structures" in the felt - who, apart from Charlotte, could come up with such sophisticated techniques? The results of her workshops were always phenomenal; we all felt like we were on cloud nine.

With her love of experimentation, her unique feel for material and form and her unconventional approach, Charlotte Sehmisch set new standards in felt art and had a lasting influence on its development. Her inspiration and technical skills will accompany and enrich us for a long time to come.

However, she impressed us not only as an artist, but also as a person: her modesty, openness and subtle humour made her a truly great personality. We are deeply indebted to Charlotte - her legacy will live on in our work and in our hearts."

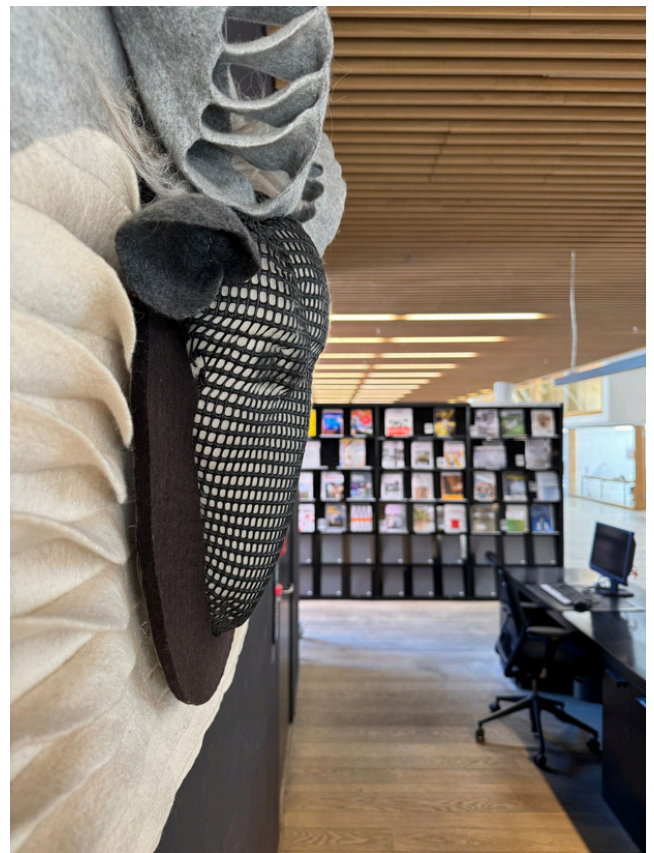
Sawatou Mouratidou (Austria)

image 4 - dresses, bags and hats are displayed on a copper bar. Hats and little dolls lie in the showcases.

image 5 - felt relief "Widder" (detail: lamellae in the felt and in the panelling of the ceiling)

Image 6 - felt relief "Weißes Rauschen"

Image 7 (below) - left: felt relief "Feuer" from the "Pfungsten" series; right: felt relief "Ausblicke für die Imme"





"It was in 2017 when I visited the FELT workshop with Charlotte Sehmisch. How gladly I remember Charlotte, her considerate and reserved way of presenting and explaining her felt art. You could really feel how much she enjoyed explaining and passing on her own ingenious techniques. I was full of admiration at how easily and patiently she helped with problems and was always on hand. I have felted a multi-layered chamber object in shades of green, which I have beautifully displayed in my living room. After all these years, it is still beautiful and reminds me every day of this admirable, outstanding felt artist. I will always remember her with great gratitude."

Elisabeth Grates (Germany)



"Charlotte was precious. That's what comes to mind when I think of her. It was something special to be able to spend time with her. Her courses were demanding and physically and mentally exhausting. We used to lovingly say that we had to completely bend our brains to do justice to the tasks that came easily to Charlotte. When we had grasped something and done it well, there was this smile, this quiet, mischievous glow. Every participant had to be satisfied. Charlotte often added hours to the course day or thought of a solution to a problem overnight. At the end, students and teacher were always completely exhausted, but euphoric with enthusiasm about what we had achieved. Happy days... Charlotte is definitely not just missed as an artist."

Susanne Weber (Austria)

Article by Silke Koch



Image 8 - felt relief „Venus“ and the resist
 Image 9 - chamber vessel by Elisabeth Grates
 Image 10 - Charlotte Sehmisch displaying her work
 Image 11 - Susanne Weber is happy with her illuminated felt art
 image 12 - Charlotte Sehmisch and an example of another speciality of hers: illuminated reliefs

Photo credits:
 1-8 Silke Koch
 9 Frieder Glatzer
 10 and 12 Susanne Weber
 11 Sawatou Mouratidou.

