



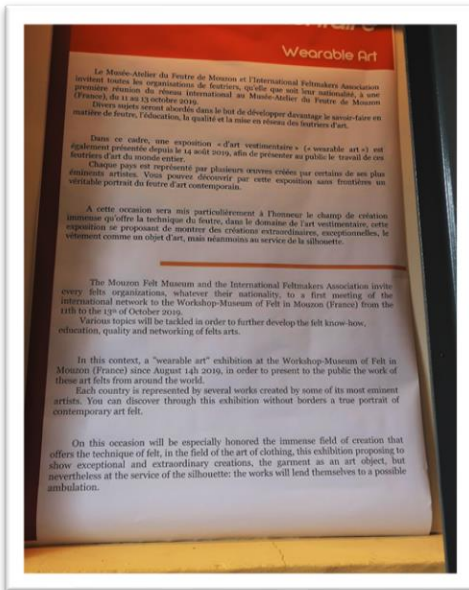
Summary of the International network meeting in Mouzon, 11 – 13 October 2019

A small group of volunteers organized together with the director of the Musée-Atelier de Feltre Mouzon, Christophe Deutsch-Dumolin this first International network meeting for board members of felt associations and representatives of countries without organisation.

About 28 people from 13 countries attended this meeting in France, coming from Northern to Southern Europe, from Western Europe to as far as Russia. The event was generously supported by the city of Mouzon and the IFA. In addition to this meeting, an exhibition „Wearable Felt Art – Art Vestimentaire“ was organized and presented from 14 August to 13 October 2019 in the Felt Museum.

The meeting was opened on Friday night with a word of welcome from our chairperson Johanna Rösti, followed by a short introduction of all people attending.

On Saturday we were officially welcomed in the felt museum by Mr Alain Renard, representative of the municipality of Mouzon. After a tour in the museum with the director Christoph Deutsch-Dumolin and the vernissage we started the first discussions.



During the meeting, the following subjects were discussed in workshops:

Workshop Quality of Felt, Saturday 12th October 2019, by Mandy Nash

There was a general consensus that all groups struggled with similar problems in enforcing good quality feltmaking.

Some groups have developed ways of trying to raise the standard:

Annelie PETITQUEUX in France has developed an intense introduction to feltmaking course covering all aspects of the craft which gives an proper understanding of the process including laminated felt and clothing.

The Belgian Felt School starts with the basic felting skills.

Filz-Netzwerk has an accreditation scheme where members can pay to have 3 samples of work accessed. Support and guidance are given to help members create work to the correct standard. Those that pass can use specially designed labels on their work. This assessment is open for every felter, not only from

Germany. *see notes at end. They also have produced a collection of samples in different techniques and wools to show how good quality felt feels. These are the list of samples:

- Hollow body thick walls of fine wool
- Hollow body thick walls of coarse wool
- Hollow body thin-walled made of fine wool
- figurative felt
- Surface felt with surface structure
- Surface felt with fine wool / coarse wool
- Nuno felt coarse and fine

There is 1 professional feltmaker in Germany.

Norway's felt group is a selective organisation.

The IFA has the CiFT standard.

Possible Action: the groups could share, learn, adapt and adopt some of the methods used within their organisations.

(I have already suggested to Androulla that, in conjunction with the CiFT programme, all RCs make a set of samples (perhaps a smaller selection from the above list) at the meeting in February to show new and old members the correct finish required.)

All organisations struggled to encourage members to do a basic felt making course. It was agreed that this isn't aided by the demand and take up of 'masterclasses'. Often students attend these classes with few basic felt making skills. Sometimes, these classes offer an 'experience' in felt making rather than full instruction in technique and design. Students leave with a finished item but may not fully understand the process as to how they achieved the outcome. Students aren't invited to question what they are doing - why they are using a certain type of wool and the importance of making samples. Design is important and often not recognised. What you want to make, which type of wool you could use, why choose a certain material, these questions are not asked. Education about all the different varieties of wool is important.

The IFA is investigating collating a recommended tutor list – setting the criteria for assessment is difficult.

Possible Action: when inviting a tutor, request a course outline first, what techniques will be used, what materials, what skills are required, will samples be made, the level of experience required? Request students to make samples of their chosen wool for the project being taught to bring to the workshop plus examples of their work so the tutor can see their standard of felt making. Make felters realize they have a choice of fleece - a tutor should give guidelines. Offer courses in basics of felting and encourage attendance.

Important to offer courses for beginners, not only for experienced felters and maybe not always combined.

Workshops must allow enough time – possibly an extra untutored day after a masterclass to develop the process.

Provide feedback forms.

The groups should work together to promote good practice and maybe use the following united aim: Encouraging well-made and properly finished felt, fit for purpose and promoting good design, developing one's own definitive style.

The groups could also produce a list of guidelines for good practice:

- Encourage understanding of the quality of different wools and their qualities
- Choosing the appropriate wool for the purpose
- Provide samples to show the correct quality
- Offer courses in basics of felting
- Associations should encourage felters to make good quality felt

Plus develop guidelines to put the following into practice:

- Quality assessment
- Basis felting courses
- Tutors register list
- Creating a protocol of good practice

Education:

The following were discussed briefly but possibly overlap with the workshop on education:

- Physical or online classes – online classes are not necessarily the best way for beginners as they need to be able to ‘feel’ the felting process to understand it fully
- Acknowledge the difference between learning a skill and felting for wellbeing, working wot children, the physically and mentally impaired, refugees etc.
- Education needs time and money
- Do we have to pay for professional education? Education is important to all organizations but some have developed it further than others. The IFA is the only one with an education officer.
- People should ask themselves “why do I make felt”, not only how.
- Important that this craft does not disappear. There must be opportunities to learn.



Definition felt ¹

(fělt)

n.

1.

a. A fabric of matted, compressed animal fibers, such as wool or fur, sometimes mixed with vegetable or synthetic fibers.

b. A material resembling this fabric.

2. Something made of this fabric.

adj.

Made of, relating to, or resembling felt.

v. **felt-ed, felt-ing, felts**

v.tr.

1. To make into felt.

2. To cover with felt.

3. To press or mat (something) together.

v.intr.

To become like felt; mat together.

What is the definition of good quality felt?

Firstly, do we need to define what is felt?

What are the criteria?

What is good quality?

How is it accessed?

Who sets the criteria?

What is the importance of assessing the quality of felt?

What is felt? Not only in physical terms but in tactile and practical ones too.

Why do we felt? Two strands, the outcome and the process. For many the process offers a restorative activity that fosters wellbeing and mental stimulus. It is a social activity forging lasting friendships.

Encourages working as a group rather than a solitary activity.

There is a danger of over defining a medium.

Design and process go hand in hand, functionality is an essential progression required for serious consideration to upgrade felt from a hobby to applied art.

Felt is not a traditional craft technique in many countries, originally used as a functional material but has been adopted, adapted and transformed in countries without a feltmaking tradition. As a new craft technique, the standard has not necessarily been set.

In some countries, the tradition has been lost. It is important that the tradition is continued.

Therefore, there are two strands, traditional and contemporary feltmaking. It is vital that the history of traditional feltmaking is not lost and is acknowledged and respected. Transition from a traditional craft to applied art.

Risk that over defining and creating a 'box' can stifle creativity.



*Filz- Netzwerk, Germany

Who can register for quality assurance?

Any interested felters with a focus on wet felting can apply!

We are looking forward to registrations of club members as well as about felt makers who are not members.

How do I sign up?

You send a mail to vorstand@filznetzwerk.de and send us your contact details by mail. Once the participation is confirmed, you will receive an invoice for the processing fee.

for members of the association Euro 50,00

for non-members Euro 90,00

How is this continuing?

The quality assurance deadline is confirmed in the processing fee documents. You will be asked to complete our data security consent form and we will inform you of the address to which you will send the following 3 papers:

Surface felt (wool felt only):

The surface felt should have a minimum size of 35 x 35 cm and a minimum weight of about 100g, which corresponds to a weight of 0.03-0.035g / qcm in Auslegemaß about.

Of course, this is a MINIMUM, i. bigger and heavier is possible.

Hohlfilz:

The hollow felt should be a bag or a vessel and a minimum size of about 25x 25 cm! The depth is not critical, but in pockets it is likely to flatten and in the case of vessels they can be deeper.

Nunofilz:

The nuno felt, preferably a scarf or similar. must be at least 35 x 100 cm.

Sample flaps are NOT approved. Of course, clothing may also be submitted, this must then additionally meet the criteria of the hollow felt.

The ratio of fabric and wool should be commensurate, i.e. either the wool flat on the fabric or in the ratio 2/3.

Fundamentally, from the point of view of voluntary quality control, additions of foreign fibers are permitted, but should be expressly marked. If hair is mixed in (alpaca, mohair ...), the reduced durability must be pointed out. If more than 50% hair is used, the quality check criteria will not work!

To be submitted are the three above-mentioned workpieces. Each felt with safety pin must have a material description and a short description attached to it.

Of the 3 works submitted, 2 works in conventional technique, ie. have been produced without the use of machine-made needled nonwovens and without the use of machines.

The works to be evaluated must not! Note to the manufacturer. Optional (Something has been lost in translation!)

a short manual or artistic CV. We also ask for a completed address card, so that all workpieces, their certificate and more can be sent back to the right place.

After a successful appraisal, the test team pronounces the successful quality assurance. The participant receives a certificate, advertising material and tags as starting equipment. She can now run the logo from now on. We publish their name and provided links on our website. You will also receive your work back.

Please also note the following rules that we have given to your and our safety:

To ensure assessment continuity in quality assurance and to secure shorter examination cycles (at least 4 times a year), the board continues a fixed board of examiners. This commission is taking off at least three certified FNW members together and is appointed for two years.

The jurors meet 4 times a year. Appointments and deadlines for submissions will be announced on the website and / or by notice from the board.

In order to be allowed to carry the identification with logo, all three utility felts have to pass in front of the jury.

The evaluation takes place in camera.

Objection to the decision is not possible.

Workshop Education, Saturday 12th October 2019, by Johanna Rösti

In the first part of the workshop, we brought together - in subgroups divided into languages - which education and training systems exist in different countries and which challenges exist.

So far, there are only in a few countries a state-recognized vocational training in craft felting. In Germany, it is possible to do a 3-year state training as a textile designer specializing in felting. This is a dual system with practical training in a company and with a vocational school.

Vocational training is combined with the specialties of embroidery, knitting, weaving and trimming, which have always existed. New came bobbins and felting. The difficulty here is to find a training company. (Literatur: Fachbuch «Ausbildung Textilgestalterin», Bundesamt für Berufsbildung, Berlin)

In France there are three professional felts training centers that fulfill the 21 criteria to receive state support for students: Annelie Petiquex (from base to higher level in felting), Chrystel Chavigny (higher level in felting) and LAINAMAC, Felletin. Felt craft and felt art are still poorly known in France.

In other countries there are further training courses in the form of individual workshops or longer educational programs, which are carried out and certified on a private basis. (for example Oberroth, Germany advanced training with 6 modules). The modular trainings that have been carried out in Switzerland for almost 20 years have been discontinued due to a lack of interested students.

In some training / studies, felting exists as part of a higher level degree (e.g., textile design). In Italy, craft colleges were re-established.

Courses organized by organizations (eg CiFT from IFA, certificate course) or required level of education as a criterion for admission as a member (Norway) are further variants. Norwegian Felt association: the member-admission is judged: 3 of 5 criteria must be met. Workshops and trainings are organised by crafts associations. Especially in Russia, online courses and video masterclasses are widespread due to the long distances.

In the second part of the workshop, we looked into the future of what Education in Feltmaking could look like to be successfully continued.

What does the future of training in felting look like? Both on the internet and physical presence - it takes both. One problem is that felting is not yet described everywhere as a professional craft training. Here it might be helpful to see how this was done in Germany.

Especially in Germany is also important that the craft felting does not die out. Experience in Russia shows that thanks to the Internet, a lot of knowledge can be conveyed in good quality with video masterclasses. The balance between online meeting and physical meeting is about 10: 1. One problem with learning online is that it's rare for Teacher to learn from the students, it's a top down, and not the same from bottom to top.

For some, it sounds strange that you should offer felting online, as felting is something that should be checked with hands.

The IFA now offers online workshops of good quality for online members, "Bitesize Online Course: Discovering Feltmaking", which can serve as an introduction to the CiFT program.

Another problem is that it takes time and, above all, money to build up and continue training opportunities. It could make sense to work together with industry here.



Workshop International Exhibition Discussion, Sunday 13th October, by Laura Mabbutt

During the meeting the group discussed the prospect of a future international felt exhibition.

After much discussion the following was agreed on:

We will organise a **'Year of Felt'**. This will run 1st April 2022 - 1st April 2023.

The theme of the 'Year of Felt' will be **'Building Bridges'**

International Feltmakers Association's Exhibitions Officer (Laura Mabbutt) is the main contact for this project.

The 'Year of Felt' will encompass 3 main activities:

1. A number of exhibitions throughout the year happening in each country who would like to take part
2. An online exhibition of all artwork that is selected for the exhibitions
3. A large exhibition in one location (once the year ends) of selected work from the smaller exhibitions

Details of each of the 3 activities:

1 - Felt exhibitions in each country

- The felt exhibitions will share the common theme of 'Building Bridges'
- Felt 'Craft' and Felt 'Art' will be considered for the exhibitions
- Each country's network will be invited to be involved
- Networks who agree to be involved will organise an exhibition in their country they will organise:
 - The venue
 - The dates (that must fit within the 'Year of Felt')
 - The length of the exhibition
 - An optional tour within their country
 - The curator of their exhibition
 - The selection of artists for the exhibition
- A submission form for artists to apply to the exhibitions will be formulated by the IFA
- Each country's network will decide on whether the work in their exhibition will be for sale
- Each selected artist will pay a fee to be in the exhibition (the amount will be decided at a later date)
- Among other things, the artist application form should include:
 - An artist statement
 - An explanation of how their work fits the exhibition theme and brief
 - Display requirements for each artwork
 - A size and weight limit will be applied for artworks
- Networks from each country can invite smaller groups within their country to hold their own small events to celebrate 'The Year of Felt' to spread the celebration

2 - Online Felt Exhibition

- Will take the form of a website with a page per artist
- Artists selected for the exhibition in their country will be given a login for the website to upload their own profile of images and text
- IFA will research the best website / designer for this and will consider paying for the website set up once a quote is obtained

3 - Large selected felt exhibition

- The exhibition could happen at 'Felletin' (France) in Spring 2023 (Organised by Feutre Art Textile)
- A panel will select from the online exhibition + invite artists to send their work for physical exhibition
- Work within this exhibition will not be for sale to avoid transport expense issues for the artists (customs charges and other charges for international shipping of artwork)



Workshop networking and synergy between organizations, Sunday 13th October, by Henny van Tussenbroek

Networking = interacting with others to exchange information and develop professional contact

Synergy= interaction between organizations to produce a combined effect greater than the sum of their separate effects (1+1=3)

Expectations of networking:

Inspiration, learn from each other, cooperation, improving your own organization, elevate felt, widen the scope.

Stimulate synergy:

Meet regularly, share knowledge, it is useful to know how organizations communicate with their members. Good practice, good ideas. Co-organize workshops, share costs, share experiences. Inform each other when a teacher is available.

How:

Organize a network for felting organizations and for felting and other organizations (ETN?) and meet each other every 2 years. Maybe each time organized by a different felting organization?

Create a facebook group members only (has already been done, it is called "Feltnetwork").

Inform each other about events.

Send issues (like Felt Matters, Grima) to each other. Like FM write an article like "spotlight on" about each other's organizations.

The meeting in Mouzon was a perfect start.



Talk by Marie-Thérèse Chaupin, Laines d'Europe (Saturday 12th October)

Local and quality wool in Europe (see powerpoint presentation as separate file)

In Europe, there are **hundreds of sheep breeds**, with very diverse types of wool: coarse/fine, long/shot, crimpy or not...

The long time of breeding

Breeding and wool need time, long time.

Normally, only one shearing per year, sometimes two shearing.

Weight of a fleece: 1-3 kg greasy wool per animal.

Animal well-being and wool quality

Wool is the reflection of the health of animal

The quality of the fibres is highly linked to the life quality of sheep: good pastures, extensive breeding, not too much inside the sheepfold! All the events during the year could be seen on the staples of wool: lambing, diseases, shortage of food or water. The strength of fibres depends of them

The most important: shearing and grading

Quality of shearing: good place for shearing, no vegetable matter contamination, no short cuts

No quality product ... without a strict grading of the fleece

Every part of the fleece is useful but need to be sorted in the different qualities

Scouring, a necessary step, an ecological challenge

Removed from its impurities, the fleece loses 30 to 60 % of its weight.

High temperatures are needed, especially for merino wool which contains a high level of grease In this case, the yield is about 35%. The movements of the scouring machine, the Leviathan, are very slow.

An ecological challenge: water needs to be "cleaned" from grease, organic and vegetable matters, sand... before returning to the local water treatment plant.

High quality objects

With all these conditions only, we will get high quality products: carpets, blankets, clothes, knitting wool and felted objects.

Life quality and costs assessments

Fair remuneration for all.

Distribution of the added value at each stage of production and processing.

All along the processing chain, the life quality of the processors is to be considered: fair salaries, work in security, no stress, no short time limits.

Guarantee of origin

The association ATELIER-Laines d'Europe was founded in 1989, now, there are about 250 members, in 11 European countries: sheep breeders, craftspeople, enterprises, artists and educational entities.

Our activities; exchanges, meetings, training courses, exhibitions... The basis is the Charter.

The charter of the association ATELIER-Laines d'Europe, was established in 1989.

Use of a local raw material with a rigorous selection and guarantee of its origin

Contribution to the complete control of the sector

Establishment of a support network

Transparency of the processing chain

no person involved in the processing of a product of *ATELIER-Laines d'Europe* shall be subjected to any exploitation

Promotion of the products by a quality label with the precise origin of the raw materials, the places of processing and the working methods

What to choose?

An “**industrial**” wool from far away with some advantages

Large quantities

Immediate availability

Minimal costs

... but, some problems: a lot of km, between the sheep in Australia, scouring in China and the client in Europe; about 30.000km, and no information about the processing chain.

Or a more “**local and European**” wool

Short circuits

Direct relationships between actors in the sector

Fair prices ...

But, there are some difficulties: small quantities, less choice of colors, long time before delivery,..

We have to anticipate the needs.

Marie-Thérèse Chaupin

ATELIER-Laines d'Europe

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<http://atelierlainesdeurope.eu>

Creative part – origami flower with Henny (Saturday 12th October)



Conclusion of the meeting (Sunday 13 October)

Feedbacks of participants:

- A lot of information
- It was very generous
- So glad to meet up in person and to talk and to move forward
- Something positive happened
- Most amazing weekend
- We can help each other with the same issues
- New faces, new personal stories
- A base for new thinking structures, not only to think for the own country, but wider
- A structure to think of development
- It's important to know the faces, to make it easier
- Feeling as part of a community
- I came alone, but go back with a lot of friends
- Gives a lot of ideas
- We're back to the International Felting Family again



Many thanks to all for this inspirational network meeting, for sharing ideas and thoughts and for all your commitment around sheep, wool, felt craft and art.

“LET’S FELT THE WORLD TOGHETER” (Inge Evers 1984)

Johanna Rösti
Chairperson of International Feltmakers Association

Feltmakers (IFA) Limited registered in England No: 08453503

Attachements:

- Presentation of the organizations (Friday 11th Oct) – see address list as separate file
- Local and quality wool – presentation by Marie-Thérèse Chaupin
- UNESCO call felt making as an intangible heritage, by Marie Nagy, Hungary



Photos: Johanna Rösti, Christoph Deutsch-Dumolin, Lisbeth Wahl
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