

# SPOTLIGHT ON HUNGARY - PART 3

In this final feature on Hungarian felt makers, it gives me pleasure to introduce Flóra Carlile-Kovács. Thanks to Flóra and the textile trips she organises to Hungary, I was able to get firsthand experience of the great traditions and skills of felt making in Hungary and also gain an introduction to some of the many felt makers who live and work there. It was the start of a great adventure for me.

In this issue, I have also included Vanda Róbert and Lívia Tóth, both very talented and very different in their styles. Finally, I want to introduce Boglárka Marton-Böczi and Károly Marton. They are a young, up and coming couple trained in the traditional way, who have now set up their own Felting Studio incorporating their unique style.

If you have knowledge of a particular country

with its felt making traditions, individual felt artists or activities, and would like to help write a feature in the Spotlight Section, then do please write to me with your ideas.

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## VANDA RÓBERT



Vanda works as a textile artist and teacher of felt making in Győr, Hungary. She graduated as an aesthete and although she did not work in this field, her studies have influenced her work. Vanda also enjoys other textile work, including sewing by hand and machine, making collages with paper and textiles and working with earth, stones and plants, mark making in nature.

When she started working with felt, Vanda thought it was very much a living entity. The

creating was a source of joy and amazement, and later, the techniques became key to her work. She works with relief stitching, a quilting-like method that lifts and deepens the thick strong felted material into a shape, by stitching through outlines. This has many influences from the traditional Mongolian techniques, and Vanda collects traditional patterns and also develops her own - this has become her passion.

This relief work is reflected in the traditional

items that Vanda makes, such as bags, pillows and sitting mats. However, she doesn't stop there: her work also encompasses nuno felt in jackets, shawls, mittens etc, and pictures and collages using further felting techniques. For some time, Vanda has created unusual woven felt, and is still experimenting in this field. Tradition and experimentation run hand in hand for this multi-talented felt maker.

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## FLÓRA CARLILE-KOVÁCS



Flóra is Hungarian born and now lives and works in Seattle, USA. She has worked as a teacher and a museologist, as well as a programme co-ordinator before becoming a full time feltmaker. Her felted items have been honoured with several Wearable Art awards.

Her interests include different fibre arts such as sewing, beading, weaving, knitting, lace-making, embroidery, basket weaving and leatherwork. All of these experiences influence her current work, but felting has taken over.

Textures and surfaces fascinate Flóra, and her explorations have proven that felt making is a limitless medium. She loves to work in both 2D and 3D, whether in colour or greyscale, large or small, and enjoys all textures from fine nuno to strong thick felt. She loves that the energy levels change throughout the felting process, starting gently and later becoming stronger to produce a durable felt.

Then there is the social aspect: teaching and conducting her felt tours, helping students create and realise their dreams, and bringing people of similar interests together to share

the treasures of her home country of Hungary. Her next tour will be in August and will focus on Southern Hungary.

Flóra is active in her own felt making, and clothes the body from head to toe. Hats, scarves, garments and jewellery are also joined by small sculptures, along with more recent work on home textiles, with large wall hangings and felted pillows.

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## LÍVIA TÓTH



Lívia is a textile designer for carpets. She also teaches drawing, painting, arts and crafts techniques and History of Design at the University of Nyíregyháza and in a primary school in Veresegyház. She has been a feltmaker for about 30 years.

Lívia realised that modern arts for her were completely meaningless, but she is drawn to the Altai - the world of myths. She researches

and traces collective memory and uses the motifs of archaeology from Scythian, Hun, Avar, Romanesque and Folk Art. These she gives a new life to them with her own elements of content, colour and mood. There is a secret magic in remembering the past in a new way.

In her more recent work, Lívia also brings the vision of the garden and paradise into her

pieces. She prefers to work with pictures and carpets - often on a large scale - but does still make some clothes and accessories. In addition to felting (and teaching) Lívia weaves and creates baskets.

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# BOGLÁRKA MARTON-BÖCZY & KÁROLY MARTON



Boglárka and Károly met when they were both students at the Folk Craft Handmakers School at Nádudvar, where their teachers were Mihály Vetró and Anikó Árvai. Their dream, when they graduated, was to set up their own workshop, and they achieved that in 2016 when they created the Tekergő Felt Making Workshop, near Lake Balaton in Hungary. They are married, with a recently-born daughter.

In addition to felt making, they both learnt about leatherwork, and this features strongly in their work. Some of their felting follows the traditional folk patterns, while other pieces use a more modern perspective. They make bags, cases, wallets and clothing - wrist warmers, hats, caps, headbands and gloves. For the home, they create cushions (both sitting and ornamental), carpets of various sizes and curtains.

Their products are made from natural materials - wool, leather and threads. The very distinctive shoes they make use Australian Merino wool, with oxhide leather soles and decoration including some stitching. They also rubberise the soles to both protect the leather and make it stronger and non slip. Their special Tekergő shoes are prepared mainly for indoor use, or outside on dry days.

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