

## DEVELOPMENT OF FELTING AND ITS USAGE AREAS IN TOURISM INDUSTRY

Sevil Bülbul, Nihal Ürper, page 135-153

### ABSTRACT

Felting, which has an important place among traditional Turkish handicrafts, is a cultural value that comes from the past and is transferred to the future. With the increasing importance of this forgotten craft, in recent years, its sustainability has been the subject of the agenda of many areas. In this study, we examined the works of İrfan Civilization Research and Culture Center operating in Konya province in order to make felt making sustainable in the field of tourism. In this center, we made observations and interviews with the felt masters working in the Felting workshop. Within the scope of the study, different types of felt products were detected which were produced in the center. Also, through observation studies we took information about the raw materials and production techniques of craft all in one important for transformation process. The aim of this study is to promote the data collected with observed information's and also promote the transformation process to tourism product in the center mentioned above. With the emphasis to spiritual value of this hand to hand profession, this study aims to evaluate the Felting craft in the field of sustainable tourism and to set an example for different centers.

**Key Words:** Felting Art, Wool, Felting, Wet Felting, Dry Felting

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## **INTRODUCTION**

It is seen that felting art is used in many fields, especially in recent years, it has gained importance in the field of tourism with its cultural and historical value and has become an interesting touristic product. Therefore, this handicraft attracts the attention of researchers from different disciplines day by day. There are few academic studies on felting. In this research, it is aimed to show the sustainability of this handicraft, which has been preserved until today, in Konya province with examples, while seeking answers to the emergence, development process, construction stages and innovations of felting.

Felting, one of the Traditional Turkish Handicrafts, which is one of the values of our movable cultural heritage, has an important place in the history of Turks. It can be said that many handicrafts originated from the geography of Central Asia, the homeland of our ancestors, and diversified in different regions in interaction with different cultures. Thus, original works have emerged within the scope of Turkish handicrafts. However, among handicrafts, felting differs from others in that it is a labor product that can be repeated with its art and craft dimension. For example, when felting is evaluated from the artisanal aspect, factors such as the regions where it is produced and the age of the animal used affect the product quality. Progress has been made in this field thanks to technological possibilities. Even though felt is mass-produced, in many parts of Anatolia, production is still carried out with the methods used in the past (Daruga,2013: 41). However, the art of felting is an effort to create a non-woven surface by using the hair of certain animals (goat, sheep, rabbit, camel, llama...) with the help of hot water and soap, as well as by applying various methods such as manpower (Karatay,2019:168).

Felt is an important type of fabric that can be used for various designs in many areas of use with its natural shell-like texture and technical properties. Felt, which became the colorful life adventure of Anatolian people long ago, is the oldest known textile product (Begiç,2016:152-156). Felt is famous for its functionality far beyond handicrafts. Felt, which is also used as insulation material, keeps the hot hot and the cold cold. In products where both the material is different and the methods are unique compared to other handicrafts, a design product with high artistic value is created.

In the last twenty years, with the increase in awareness of cultural heritage in our country, interest in traditional handicrafts has started to increase. Today, many artists, especially in the field of fine arts, have started to design products and make works from felt with their interest in felt as an ecological material. Thus, felt and felt making are becoming current again, and felt objects and garments are taking their place in everyday life (Ovacık ve Gümüşer2016:155).

With the signing of the Convention on the Protection of Intangible Cultural Heritage (SOKÜM), Felting, like many cultural values, has been taken under protection in our country. Under the Convention, the felting tradition is included in the Element List of the National Inventory of Intangible Cultural Heritage (Arioğlu and Aydoğdu Atasoy2015: 118). The production stages differ from other centers and products, such as the inclusion of felt in products used in modern life in different fields (shawls, vests, etc.), shaping felt products according to the visual services sector, reducing the thickness of the felt fabric as much as possible, and working to prevent itching and unpleasant odor. For example; within the scope of a research on the evaluation of felting in Afyonkarahisar in terms of cultural tourism, there are findings that production based on the felting tradition is carried out in the form of non-patterned (plain) felt, patterned (spotted) felt, three-dimensional felt and notched felt (Koca,2018: 943-955). Looking at the felt production centers, it is seen that the tradition of Mevlânâ Celâleddîn-i Rûmî, the historical and spiritual value of Konya, has led to the proliferation of felt products for mysticism. The fact that this center has felt masters registered as human treasures gives hope for the continuation of this tradition.

## **CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK**

Within the scope of this research, felting handicraft, which is preserved in Konya province where touristic activities are intensively experienced, was examined. The felting handicraft is limited to its development in the regions where the Turks lived, especially in this research. In addition, among the activities of IRFA, the spirituality of this handicraft, which is important in transferring it to new generations without moving away from tradition, was also mentioned. Examples are presented about the importance of tourism in the protection of the cultural value of this handicraft within the framework of intangible

cultural heritage by discussing the different designs of the products produced by the masters in the field of felting in Konya.

## **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

In the first stage, a relevant literature review was applied with the document analysis technique and answers were sought to the questions appropriate to the purpose in the interview with the relevant person. In the second stage, qualitative research techniques were utilized and the necessary data for the research were obtained through interviews and observations in the field.

The cultural objects in a felt workshop where Yunus Girgiç, the son of Mehmet Girgiç, whose works were awarded by Unesco as one of the "Living Human Treasures" in 2008 and who was also awarded the outstanding service award by the Turkish Grand National Assembly, continues his work in İRFA with his son, who is on his way to becoming a felt master, were added to the research as digital document data. In this interview with Yunus Girgiç, progress was made based on 5 questions.

1. Why your felt product designs tend towards mystical elements?
2. What do you think about the different ways felt is used today?
3. What can be done for promotion and development without moving away from tradition?
4. Is the art of felting a doable endeavor, skill or hobby for everyone?
5. Which of your products attract the most interest and what is the economic aspect?

## **HISTORY OF FELTING**

Although there is no exact date, it can be assumed that the invention of felt in the timeline dates back to the Neolithic Age and that the process of formation took place with certain animals such as horses and sheep by giving the wool a felting quality with the domestication of sheep (Oyman ve Sevinç,2016:263-265). Felt is also known to have been used as a means of shelter for humanity or for the use of animals as labor.

While there is no exact information on how felt was first obtained, when we look at the etymological origin of the word "felt", it first appears as a written document in Homer's Iliad epic (Semra,2012:1176). While it is thought that a felt item mentioned in the source is very likely to be the headgear worn by the noble people and gods dedicated in the Hittite reliefs, it is also seen that such headgears were passed on to the Phrygians over time and that they even used them in their daily lives (Akçora and İlden, 2012:123-124). It is known that the Phrygians, who were also successful in weaving, benefited from the quality wool of sheep, which were abundant in Central Anatolia. As a matter of fact, traces of carpets hung on the walls and felt and decorated fabrics laid on the floor were found in the Gordion Tumuli (Sevin2003:262). The Greeks wore felt over their helmets. Pompeii excavations revealed a felt-making workshop. Caesar of the Rome used felt as a shield against arrows. Felt also served as a protective cover for equipment and towers at that time (Bergen1948).

When we look at the ancestral homelands of the Turks, it is seen that the materials made of wool and felt are highly valued. It is known that Turkish culture attaches importance to burial ceremonies. The person was carried in a piece of wool (felt) or woolen material and placed in a burial place (kurgan) in a specially designed room made of felt, carpet, wool and woven rugs. The use of felt in the grave site is due to the fact that it is a protective material. In addition, the fact that felt is used in such ceremonies can be considered as an important measure of respect for the animal whose wool is used (Deniz2009). Finds from the Noyun-Ula kurgans of the Great Hun State, which date back to the 1st century BC, have proven the existence of weaving techniques and felts in this period. On the felts unearthed here, appliqué ornaments made with colored wool yarns and probably obtained with a technique belonging to the Huns were found (Öğel1991:60). The finds in Pazırık kurgans, which are evaluated within the scope of the Altai cultural environment, are also important in terms of showing the development process of feltin. On a 4.5 x 6 m. wall covering with applique on felt recovered from the fifth Pazırık kurgan, in a frequently repeated composition in the areas between borders with floral depictions arranged in a four-directional motif, a goddess figure is seated on a throne holding a tree of life, while a Hun nobleman on a horse with a braided tail is seen in front of her (Çoruhlu,2007:132). It is known that the Turkish states

obtained most of the tools they needed through interaction with similar cultures in their vicinity due to their non-settled life. Therefore, it enabled them to exchange these goods, which were made of felt and wool, with other neighboring countries through contracts they signed (Begiç2014: 20-24). The existence of felt among the cultural values of the Gokturks is understood through some written sources. Among them, it is noteworthy that the Chinese Song Yung mentioned that in 518 the ruler of the Eflalites (Akhunlu) was dressed in embroidered silk and lived in large felt tents (Barişta1995:9). In the 9th century, Oghuz and Turkmen troops moved as a group out of their homelands, first to Asia Minor and then to Anatolia. After the 11th century, they gradually settled in this region and made efforts to realize the cultural construction of Anatolia today (Erden1999: 4).

Ahi organizations were active in Anatolia between the 12th and 14th centuries and achieved significant success in the arts, trading activities and economics. In the Anatolian Seljuk, Principalities and Ottoman Periods, the power of Ahi organizations has revealed its impact on both the state and society. Ahi organizations have played an important role in the continuity and progress of trade and business. During these periods, felting became one of the most important traditional crafts. In a source on Ahi Order, it is stated that thanks to the Ahi organizations, they developed measures to increase the productivity and production of angora goats, from which the raw material for the production of mohair in Ankara was obtained (Tarih İçinde Ankara, 2008:183). It was not easy for Turks to establish a homeland in Anatolia, it is understood that the social life of various principalities and states and the processes up to this stage, the influence of the Ahi organization and the economy of the country depending on time have a constructive power on those who are engaged in small-scale trade or handicrafts and artists (Bayram, 2001: 7-9). The art of felting spent its heyday in the Seljuk state and then in the Ottoman Empire until the time of the Reform movements. After the Industrial Revolution, the production of products in the textile field increased. One of the textile products affected by this situation is felt. The economic crises following the Second World War accelerated the identification of new basic materials and a new process in the textile industry was initiated with the discovery of non-natural fibers (Begiç2014: 4). Historically, this handicraft, which has a large-scale field of practice ranging from headdresses to swaddling clothes, from

spreads to tents, has been evaluated as a craft product; today it has experienced a change in itself. In addition to being an art that feeds more on creativity over time, the fact that it has a cultural value has a great impact on its becoming the center of attention. In this sense, it was inevitable for felt, which is a stakeholder of non-settled culture, to change its identity in order to ensure sustainability at such a time. (Gür, 2012:1173-1175).

It can be said that felt has been used in different areas throughout history. The Turks, who have been living a nomadic life for centuries, put forth products after they started to be settled with the different experiences of the culture brought by nomadism, in many different fields, as a spread on the floor of the tent, swaddling for the newborn baby, the household covered with felt on the outside, the roof to lay out the products, the sack for the product, the aba (woodmeil) on the shepherd, kepenek (cloak), felt booties and shoes on their feet, sikke (coin) felt, door curtain, panel, cedar felt, sharpened cone on the head, pillion for the horse, cover for the mattress and coffin (Seyirci and Topbaş 1999:577).

## **RAW MATERIALS USED IN FELT MAKING**

Wool is the main working material of felt. In Kashgarli's work "Divan-ü Lûgat-it-Türk", which conveys important information from the Central Asian geography where Turks live, the original of the word wool is defined as "*wool created to produce felt*" with the expression "kidhizlik yüng" (Atalay,2006: 507). Felt products are produced with or without patterns as needed. As in many handicrafts, felt is a product whose production phase takes time and requires a lot of effort. Another point to be considered is that the animal wool to be used in felt making must be from the shearing made in May (first shearing). After this, the wool is carefully exposed to remove the thorns, seeds and lumps and then spread out with a spring and mallet until the wool is separated (Atiş, 2009: 125).

In felt production workshops where the kicking method is applied, tools such as steam boiler, rod, scale, mold, scissors, cutter, water container, broom, rope, paint boiler are used to produce products. The process of placing the pattern on the wicker and then releasing the wool and spreading it with the help of tools known as sepki or sticks is called

"scattering". The wool is especially effectively felted with tap water and the felt is moistened. The wool is then wrapped between mats, kicked with manpower and heated in the bathhouse.

The felt product, whose cooking process is finalized in the workshop or bath environment, is passed through the final stage process. The felt is crushed with a heavy load with plenty of water and then dried, drained and hung up.

### **TECHNIQUES USED IN FELTING AND PATTERNS APPLIED**

Techniques in Turkish embroidery can be categorized under five groups according to the application forms of the needles formed on the weft and warp yarns of the weaving. Needles driven on the threads of the weaving; Needles made by closing the threads of the weaving, Needles made by pulling the threads of the weaving; Needles made by cutting the threads of the weaving, Needles made by tying the threads of the weave or weavings (Barışta1997:1). Felt, which has a very common usage area, differs in terms of its pattern and dye. In addition to realistic expressions such as animal depictions and horsemen, mostly in navy blue, red, purple, blue, brown, green and the natural wool colors of the animal, legendary animal motifs also brought together the compositions before the adoption of Islam. Due to its texture, the wool moves to different points during felting and its dimensions are reduced to a certain extent. Due to this quality of the wool, the size of the patterns placed on the product to be obtained will vary during the spinning and cooking processes.

Image 1. 25x35, Mural.





**Technique:** In addition to the place of felt in cultural objects, works of art are created depending on the imagination of the creator, as in this example. The pattern was created first and then the ground was added in a method from straight to reverse. Thus, the colors are intertwined, preventing complexity on the surface. The combination of different colors has changed the color tones.

**Pattern:** The tulip represents the oneness of God in Sufism. Its literal meaning goes all the way back to the "crescent", the symbol of the Ottoman flag and banner. Design: Yunus Girgiç.

Source: İRFA/Konya

The printing and application methods give the felt a shape that the artisan or artist has no control over during the spinning and cooking process. The professional must know the wool well and know its quality. Only by blending this type of felt product with special experience, they achieve the desired result (Soysaldı, 2008: 71-77).

## TRADITIONAL KICKED FELT

Production using the kick felting method consists of three stages. First, the wool required for the design product is laid and the patterns to be included in the production of felt with motifs are prepared. In the second stage, distribution around the wool, motif formation and feeding applications are carried out. Finally, for the third step, the felt is washed and dried. At the end of the wool spreading application, the surface of the wool is dispersed with soapy water at an average temperature with the help of a broomstick or by hand, and the arranged wool is rolled together with the floor covering and roller pressed (Kılıç and Akpınarlı, 2017: 1429-1432). The roll is wrapped and tied many times with rope in order not to scatter in the roll-up application and the roll-up method is started. The stomping process is an application with

human foot power for about half an hour. This process requires several people to perform the movement in rhythm. The roller, on which pressure is applied with one foot and a strong step, is kicked on the ground by shaking it front and back. After this stage, the rolled roll is re-laid and the damaged perimeter called "Frame" is corrected. The unprocessed felt, whose framework has been reviewed, is put into the "cooking" process, moistened and rolled again, and once again subjected to the kicking process (Güllü ve Gürler2016: 204). In felt production, current means are used to replace the spring and mallet with a beater tool, and for the kick application, a kicker machine is used instead of human labor.

There is no change during the felting process with these tools, which are the opportunities offered by the latest technology. Finally, the felt is cleaned with water and rolled into a roll so that it is not loose again. The roll is kept in the vertical direction, the absorbed water is thoroughly drained and then the product is hung to dry.

Image 2. Mevlevi sikke in Mihrabiye 15cm, frame, 55x70.



**Technique:** The traditional kick felting method and the wet felting technique were applied to fix the details to the ground.

**Motif:** Wall ornament reflecting the cultural values of the region. An example of a felt work created with the technique (motif first) from straight to reverse with a green and yellow border decorated around the center of the Ottoman text "Ya Hazrat Mevlâna" and the Mevlevi sikke. Design: Yunus Girgiç. Source: İRFA/Konya.

## **WET FELT**

Looking at the production method; there are many similarities between both techniques. First of all, as a first step, the ready wool is set aside. (Derebaşo and Oyman2016: 34). The next stage, separate from the common felt production, the nylon flooring is laid inside the wicker mat. A nylon layer of wool is thrown on top of the wicker cover in this state. Discarded wool patterns called fibers or cakes are placed on top. After the preparation process is completed, the felt is sprinkled with soapy warm tap water to moisten the whole felt and then the wrapping process is started. The first thing to do is to wrap the nylon and then support it with a stick and finally tie it with a straw cover. The spiral made by placing the stick at the ends of the straw is intended to be tough and durable, and the narrowing effects are intended to reduce the slipperiness of the wool. For this formed roll, it is rolled by applying pressure thirty or forty times. After completing the other steps, this rolled felt is laid out, rinsed and left to dry. Due to the fact that the felts made with wet technique are less layered, they can be shaped in the desired way and patterns can be created and these patterns can be easily revealed.

## **DRY FELT**

In the second half of the 19th century, following mechanization, the technique of "needle felting" was invented without the basic materials of water and soap. In the last quarter of the 20th century, artists David and Elenor Stanwood made the industrial needle workable by hand and realized the needle felting technique in their cultural activities. (Başaran and Bulat,2016:32).

Image 3: A woman figurine from Konya region, 3D touristic and decorative trinket,10x20 cm.



**Technique:** Needle-printed, seamless joining of wool of different colors allows for design. The rising heat of the needle due to the movement with each stroke facilitates the shaping of the wool.

**Motif:** Unlike the straight to reverse method, the mold is first determined, the shape is revealed, and facial features and clothes are added to the object. Design: Nihal Ürper,2021.

The dry and neatly shaped wool is spread on the brush in thin layers, one row transversely and one row vertically, forming at least 6 layers. With a felting needle, the wool is inserted and removed with needle strokes until the wool is intertwined. A brush tool or soft cloth is placed behind the fabric and the needle is started to be stroked. Although this method is a more comfortable process than traditional wet felting, it is preferred for creating more patterns or for appliqué application on these fabrics without sewing, since small felt products are made in accordance with the dimensions of the brush (Özdemir and Özdemir2019: 562-563).

Felt patterning methods can be commonly handled in four types, such as creating motifs during production, using applique technique, patterning by embroidering and patterning with dry wool. The pattern to be used for appliqué is temporarily combined on the source weaving depending on certain numerical values. Then it is sewn and fastened with thread in a color suitable for the pattern and the weavings used. The applique technique is a very widely used technique in Anatolia from past to present (Çeliker2011: 48). Evidence of the historical use of this appliqué technique can be found in the works of Hun art. In the archaeological studies, ornamental appliqué techniques were encountered in different forms cut from animal hides and felt used by the Huns, on saddles and covers, and on leather and felt spreads on top of them (Diyarbakirli1972: 79).

## EVALUATION OF FELTING IN KONYA WITHIN THE SCOPE OF SUSTAINABLE TOURISM

When the traces of felting in Anatolia are traced, it is seen that cities such as Konya, İzmir, Afyonkarahisar and Şanlıurfa, which have intensively revived cultural interactions until today, are important centers. In these centers, the fact that the felt material from the past is still produced today with traditional methods has gained importance in terms of tourism.

There have also been recent innovations in the techniques used. Placing products reflecting Turkish culture in historical buildings and exhibiting many handicrafts such as these can be turned into opportunities through sustainability projects. By raising the level of awareness of individuals on this issue, felt can be promoted in touristic markets and the purchasing potential for those who discover products made from this material can be increased.

Image 4. A bag of cultural value with a seamless strap, 25x20.



**Technique:** A touristic bag made with the help of soap and water from straight to reverse, including the whirling dervish which is the symbol of Mevlevism, tulip, letter vav dominated by camel hair color. Although it is not preferred, sometimes needle printing can be applied to soothe the small details. There are no seams on the straps.

**Motif:** The letter Vav symbolizes the universe and the letter Elif symbolizes the key to the universe. Design: Yunus Girgiç Source: İRFA/Konya.

Today, as a result of industrial developments, materials such as plastic and nylon are used more and more. Compared to many phased and labor-intensive works, these materials are affordable and easily accessible. In addition, felt making has undergone technical transformations and today production time is shorter and the product range is more diverse. Producing traditional felt products requires muscular strength due to the size and thickness of the products.

Making large pieces of felt requires the collaboration of at least two artisans (Aktaş and Makela,2017: 2-3).

Konya is a cultural center that gives importance to many past cultures and touristic values, was the capital of the Seljuk State and is known for Mevlana Rumi. In this context, the unity of traditions and customs of the region has been formed and it has become a place of spiritual values. It is known that handicrafts were developed according to the plant raw materials in the region. Konya is still a rich felt region in terms of both the number of craftsmen and the people's belief in the benefits of using felt. While felting was a group of work done to make a living in Konya before, today it is done by a few experts. Designed felt products are exhibited in the shop windows of many local businesses around the Mevlana Museum, the most frequented point of the city known for its Sufi character (Karakaya,2011: 9-12).

From the past to the present, communities ranging from principalities to states have been more attentive to their appearance in order to differentiate their communities from others for various reasons. In the Ottoman period, felt was generally used on the head and according to the form it took, it determined the class or rank of the wearer. In this period, apart from the headdresses with functional meanings, felt also took on distinct characteristics as the headdresses worn by various religious members (Çeliker,2011:5). The Seljuk Turks carried this tradition, such as felting, with them from Central Asia to Anatolia, especially in the Konya region in the early days. Konya is the center of the beginning and development of Mevlevism. After Mevlana Jalaluddin Rumi, the Mevlevis also began the process of determining their own lifestyle, paying attention to their clothing and making themselves different. Mevlevi clothes have been designed and created for seven hundred years and have survived to the present day without losing anything from the day they were created. For example, the sikke was a clothing item that belonged exclusively to the Mevlevis, and was mostly produced and worn in Konya (Önder,1954:931). The sikke is a long felt cap, 45-50 cm long.

The definition of sikke (coin) in the literature is "to press and put" (Begiç,2011:303). "Coins-Sikkeler" are light brown or yellowish in color and are produced in special facilities using white Angora (Ankara Goat), camel or sheep wool. The importance of the sikke is evident from the fact that one of the penalties imposed within the Mevlevi community was to remove the sikke from the head. A member of the

community who is stripped of his sikke is known to wear an ordinary headdress until he is forgiven by the Sheikh and allowed to wear it again. The Sikke symbolizes mystical maturity (Gürkan (t.y):6-7). When we look at the clothing of the Mevlevis, there is also a type of headdress called "Arakiyye", which is a light, short, thin headdress made of Angora (Ankara Goat), with a tight upper part. "Destar" is a fabric tied around the sikke. It is known that the destar, which can only be worn by the sheikh, is not worn every day, but only on special occasions and rituals (Kılınç 2011: 817-818).

Image 5. Various sikkes with customary destars specific to Mevlevi Dervishes and the molding tools on them.



**Technique:** The wool pieces, which were tightened with the kick felting method, were joined at the ends to form sikkes and used. There is no motif. Design: Yunus Girgiç Source: İRFA/Konya

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

One of the most deep-rooted traditional handicrafts of the Turkish tribes leading a nomadic life is felting. In this production, which became important with the settlement of Oghuz Turks from Central Asia to Anatolia, the sustainability of this handicraft has been ensured with covers, tents, boots and many other similar products made of felt. In the modern sense, it is common to downsize products and use them more for decorative purposes. Today, felt products are an indispensable stop in touristic destinations, handmade souvenirs are tried to be kept in authentic environments and this phenomenon has turned into a sector. In a felt shop, especially the most common products include tops, trinkets, bags, coasters, saddlebags, cushions, gloves, mats, booties, slippers and hats.

Felt products obtained recently have gained the characteristic of a cultural value with their environmental and nature-friendly nature. With these values, it should be developed as an alternative product within the scope of cultural tourism. As a result of the findings obtained in this study, it has been understood that the felt material has been preserved for generations, adding value to the spirituality of Konya Province and developed in terms of mysticism. According to the examinations made, it is seen that there are few individuals from the new generations who can bring this handicraft to the contemporary dimension.

In the interview with Girgiç, it is understood that the products and the motifs on them are inspired by the people of the region. The devotion of the people of Konya to their deep-rooted past, the high level of spirituality and the tendency towards mysticism make it inevitable for felt masters to show a tendency towards this. It was stated that felt craftsmen mostly produce bags, carpets, rugs, wall paintings and headdresses. The masters of felting approach positively to the three-dimensional trinket-style felt figurines produced in accordance with the time. Because the fact that felting is not only the use of the same product in different varieties, but also the change and transformation of felting in accordance with the time shows that felting says "I am in the changing world". However, in order for felting to maintain and sustain its existence in a changing world, efforts should be made to promote and market it in the most appropriate way. Documentaries, short films and festivals can be made with the help of the Ministry of Culture for the promotion of Konya, its historical museums and felting, one of the handicrafts. Of course, it is not that such events are never held, but this deficiency stems from the lack of sufficient contact between the experts and the practitioners of the profession. The aim is not to ensure that everyone is engaged in felting, but to know the story of the products that have been put forward for months, maybe years for this handicraft, and the story of the artist who put these products together. Personal stories are motivating, and bringing these stories together for scientific reality and drawing inferences from them, with a collective consciousness, gives us statistical data about felting as far as human beings can perceive it. If the awareness of felting increases, the level of awareness of people about felting increases; in this way, it makes felting an interesting and valuable occupation. People who find felting interesting also tend to engage in felting as a hobby and occupation.



When a job is done with real love, it becomes a meditation tool for the person. It was stated by the artist that a lot of felt products are ordered for the period series that are currently being filmed. In this way, the order demand of felt in mystical products has increased considerably, and although he stated that he has difficulty in keeping up, the satisfying part of the profession at such times, according to Girgiç, is to give people experience from the products he provides them. The users were identified as those who had felt vests and cardigans sewn for healing, those who needed decorative tools and equipment, and sometimes those who ordered the headdresses with motifs of high cultural value or each of which had great meaning and were considered valuable to store and display them. Girgiç, who has been operating in this field for 16 years, welcomes guests who are interested in the profession in Konya- İRFA, which was built as a complex in accordance with traditional Turkish Islamic art.

It is a fact that most people know what felt material is, but very few people experience its functionality, the art of felting and its areas of use. Export and import to tourist areas should be increased to revitalize their use in different ways. The regions in our country that are far from the production sites of these products are deprived of our cultures. Felt, which is referred to as "a wool dough kneaded with skin", needs many perspectives from master hands to students to create different designs for widespread use. Although education of this occupation, hobby and field of interest is being given, it is essential to endear and love the history of felt beforehand. Thus, felting will continue to be a valuable element of Turkish culture.

#### **INTERVIEW SOURCE :**

Yunus Girgiç, Interview date: 05.04.2022

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