



ULLRICH SCHMIDT

Since 50 years now Ullrich Schmidt has dedicated himself to métier of artistic design of textiles. Tied or woven as yarn, or processed to felt, the material wool is nearly as old as humanity itself.

From the Mid-sixties to the late eighties it was mainly about knotting and weaving, but since the nineties he prefers the variously designable and workable method of felting. During his career as an artist he gained artistic sovereignty and creative expressiveness with each year, with each new opus. Numerous single- and group-exhibitions have made him famous not only in the East-Thuringian and West-Saxon area, but also beyond.

The core of his design portrays the suspenseful relation between man and nature. For him this connection evolves from the material itself, which is already being expressed in his early works, but becomes clear at the latest with the analog transfer of the motive-ideas from the Freester Fischerteppiche (Fishermen-carpets of Freest) onto Thuringian motives such as stag beetle, fir and carline thistle. To form a very own textile symbolism for the Thuringian area is unique and highlights him as an artist. Today many of his works are private property.

His creations emerge from an intense and inspiringly emotional bond between the designer and his material. The artwork of the artist signalizes a tense contrast between the compositional form and the loose flow of the organic material. The designer gives as much space as possible to his material without ever losing his bond to the constructive scaffold of the textile picture or the three-dimensional object. Creative power and confident control of the craft fuse together in Ullrich Schmidt's work.

His themes are ruled by statements about the life of mankind in a world, self-created in involvement with nature and the resulting consequences for society and individual. Who looks and senses very carefully will often find some profound humor woven into his works.

The artist discovers/uses a very sensible language of form for his work and his material, which by its suggestive powers challenges the viewer to think and discuss. The best of his works attain their meaning by the accomplishment of this self-chosen aspiration.



ROLAND SPIEß

After he attended university and received his PhD Roland Spieß conducted a group of researchers at the University Bonn from 2003 to 2011, which concentrated on the nervous system of fly larvae. The meticulousness and patience which was necessary in this field has proved itself valuable for his present occupation.

This career as an artist already started in 1997. Roland Spieß is self-taught and therefore a lateral entrant to the artistic area. He followed his goal persistently and was constantly gaining more knowledge, improving his tools and his materials.

He finds his inspiration in already existing forms, but also in direct contact and involvement with nature. One for us rather unusual inspirational source for him are computer games. From these inspirations he forms in handiwork unique jewelry, knives and little sculptures out of natural materials such as antlers, bone, mammoth ivory, wood, leather and metal. We find not only objects of utility in his repertoire, but also luxury goods. Some objects unite both.

The pieces aren't manufactured on the basis of fixed patterns. They are rather developed by the combination of the basic idea and the respective features and characteristics of the material. Therefore every object is unique, because even with identical motives differences occur, based on the material and the treatment, which eliminates confusion or duplicates.

But what actually is Scrimshaw? It looks a little bit like a tattoo

Scrimshaw is a miniature scratching and engraving technique on faunal materials, just like Roland Spieß is using them: mammoth ivory, horn and bone.

The name Scrimshaw derives from the era of whale hunters, who in the 18th and 19th century spent their free time on travels or at home ornamenting whalebone and –teeth. Most of the works on sperm whale teeth, whalebones and walrus tusks originate from North American whale hunters.

To manufacture a scrimshaw the working surface of the material has to be polished as smooth as glass. In this area the motive gets "scrimmed", meaning carved in or accurately punctuated into the material with a fine, needle-sharp tool and gets dyed afterwards. This work is done under a magnifier or a microscope – both well known to a biologist.

The artist signs his works with the object he has been researching for eight years: an abstract depiction of the pharyngeal nervous system of a *Calliphora vomitoria*-larvae, partially completed with month and year of the production.