ForeWord Reviews

CRAFTS & HOBBIES

A Felt Farm
Rotraud Reinhard
Floris Books
978-0-86315-789-9
(January 2012)

There's a German proverb that translates, you can't turn a billy goat into a gardener. In English, we might say don't trust the cat to watch the cream or don't send the fox to guard the henhouse. But after spending some time in the wooly world of Rotraud Reinhard's *A Felt Farm*, your faith in the goodness of all creatures will be restored and you'll want to create all sorts of idyllic or fantastic farming scenes. Translated from the original German by Anna Cardwell, this beautiful book guides beginning and experienced felters through the creation of everything *farm.* From flowering meadows and apple trees to cattle and troughs and the milking shed, from lambs and pigs and geese, to the cast iron stove of their human keepers, *A Felt Farm* is packed with gorgeous examples, clear instruction, and helpful hints sure to inspire.

With projects increasing in difficulty from the most basic—some of which can even be completed by young children—to those that are quite advanced, this charming book is perfect for experienced crafters and greenhorns alike. Reinhard outlines not only degrees of difficulty and accurate lists of supplies, but the approximate length of time to complete each piece, so ambitious crafters will know what just they are in for. Easy-to-follow photographs guide the crafter along their way. Many of the projects are completed with little use of tools, making them great for preschool and elementary-age children. Of particular interest to small children will be the story picture-book in the last third of *A Felt Farm*. The photographs promise what is possible with felt (a multitude of sweet, sensitively rendered creatures and their accoutrements) as Reinhard's beguiling story leads us through a day in the life of a farming family.

One of the alluring aspects to felting is the individuality of each creation. Reinhard reinforces that each project is unique and in working with such natural fibers, one must let go the expectation of precision—a valuable lesson for all crafters. Whether wishing to create an entire farm, provide supplemental pigs to a child's play set or a hobbyist's display, wishing to engage your family in a common endeavor that allows for a wide range of skill and plenty of creativity, or simply flipping through the beautiful scenes, *A Felt Farm* is guranteed to delight.

Jennifer Sperry Steinorth