



# FELT FOR THE INTERIOR

## ANNE VAN DE WEIJER



FELT; THE PERFECT NATURAL MATERIAL FOR LAMPSHADES AND WALL PANELS. IT GIVES A WARM ATMOSPHERE AND IS SOUND ABSORBING!



In a lively street in the centre of The Hague, a beautiful shop - Vilt aan Zee - is located. As well as lots of different kinds of lampshades and wall panels, visitors can watch the 'making process' as the shop is also the place of production. [Page 30]

Anne van de Weijer started Vilt aan Zee nine years ago with a friend but, for the past five years, she has been the owner of the business and now works with interns and collaborates with other artists.

'My friend and I were both architects who wanted to create products not only on a computer, but also with our own hands.

We learnt about felt during a textile course and decided from the beginning to focus on lampshades because of the beautiful filtering effect of thin felt. From that moment, we spent one day a week investigating materials for this purpose in conjunction with our daily architectural job'.

We gave considerable attention to placing the wool in a certain structure, layer after layer. [Image 1] This determines the form and the image. We experimented with many different kinds of wool to find out which would be the best; it had to felt easily and maintain a certain strength (long hair), and it should have a beautiful shine and colour. I now use white Corriedale most of the time. We made calculations to find out how big the 2D resists had to be to get a 3D lampshade

of a particular size, and we also did loads of experiments with the stiffer that we use to harden the lampshades in the final process.

Everyone who works with felt knows the varieties are endless. You can use all kinds of coloured wool and additional fibres, or even paint the wool afterwards. It is very tempting to use all these possibilities, but I try to keep the lampshades sober. I always use natural white wool, and customers can choose to add an extra colour or silk threads, for example, as decoration. From experience, I can say that most customers stick with plain white.

We started with spherical lampshades, both small and very large ones up to 120 cm wide [Image 2], but during the past year, I have focused more on organic forms such





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as NYR [Image 3]. The lampshades are now hanging in several restaurants in Europe and also in America. We sold two big lampshades to a duo of popular designers who own a vintage clothing store, which led to us being approached by some trendy customers from New York.

A special collection is Felt+Paper which I produced with Mark de Weijer, a paper artist and painter. With this collection, we combine felted lampshades with paper pulp, which gives a beautiful contrast of light and dark / hard and soft materials. [Image 4]

I also create felted wall panels. Every piece is unique, and the result is always a surprise. I love the work of Marthe Wery with its coloured areas in different tones, and this inspired me

to try to do this in felt. One technique is to mix the colours in advance using a carding machine. Every piece is built up from different colours, and it feels like painting when you put all the different colours together. [Image 5]

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Customers often approach me for a wall panel because of the combination of the softness of the material, the intense colour experience and, importantly, the sound absorbing qualities of the panels. We discuss the colours and image and, after producing

some samples, I create the final design.

At the moment, I am experimenting with 3D wall panels where I place a felted piece on a 3D mould, apply hardener and leave it to dry.

This produces a beautiful effect, and it's even more effective in absorbing sound.

CONTACT DETAILS  
E: [info@viltaanzee.nl](mailto:info@viltaanzee.nl)

W: [www.viltaanzee.nl](http://www.viltaanzee.nl)  
#viltaanzeelight

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ANNE van de WEIJER