



▲ **FIGURE 1.** Meri Linna guides a wool-inspired meditative walk in the forest and relaxation round the fireplace. Photographs: Minna Kovero, 2024.

Rooted-Wool-Being Workshop

Author: Tatiana Kravtsov and Minna Kovero

The Rooted-Wool-Being workshop brought together crafters, artists, designers, and entrepreneurs to collaboratively develop ideas for new wool-based products and services. Taking place in Muonio next to Keimiötunturi fell, the three-day workshop focused on well-being and nature connectedness, combining co-design, lectures, a farm visit, experiential crafting, and meditational practices with wool. The workshop encouraged innovation through collaboration across varied backgrounds, with all ideas openly shared with participants and the wider public.

The *Rooted-Wool-Being* workshop took place in Muonio, Northern Finland, in late summer 2024, and was thematically centred on the potential of wool to enhance nature connectedness and well-being. The three-day programme included co-design sessions, lectures on Finnish wool and slow craft practices, a visit to Taulavuori farm, guided relaxation with wool, sheep skin crafting, and meditative weaving in nature.

The workshop brought together wool practitioners and enthusiasts from across Finland, including Helsinki, Nurmes, Tampere, Rovaniemi, Muonio, Ivalo, and Inari. Participants' professional backgrounds were diverse, ranging from art and craft practices in textiles, wool, and ceramics to sheep farming and academic research in archaeological textiles and natural dyes.

►► **FIGURE 2.** Anu Pentti presenting her lecture *Sheepskin Covers – Warmth with Roots and Symbols*. Participants are printing on and sewing the sheep skin. Photographs: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.



► **FIGURE 3.** Meeting sheep at the Taulavuori Farm. Shearing of the sheep with scissors guided by the farm owner Teemu Taulavuori. Photographs: Minna Kovero, 2024.



The workshop began with a wool-related meditative walk in the forest and wool imagery relaxation round the fireplace which were led by Meri Linna, a wool crafter and nature-based practitioner from Muonio. This experience provided grounding at the outset of the workshop by offering participants a moment of presence and slowing down, whilst fostering connection with the local natural environment (Figure 1). The meditative walk was followed by two opening lectures that introduced and delved into the concept of wool-being and its meanings: the lectures *Multisensory Ways with Rooted Stories*, presented by Minna Kovero, and *Nature Connectedness* and *Slow Crafting*, presented by Tatiana Kravtsov. Both encouraged collective reflection and discussion on the possibilities of wool to support and enhance our well-being. During these discussions, a selection of raw Finnish wool and yarn was displayed, allowing participants to engage through sensory exploration.

The day continued with a presentation by a sheep farmer and wool crafter, Anu Pentti, entitled *Sheepskin Covers – Warmth with Roots and Symbols*, followed by a sheep skin crafting workshop. Participants were invited to print sheep skin using various symbols and to sew small objects, such as scent pouches or wrist warmers (Figure 2). The tactile engagement with the material supported a deeper connection to natural materials, traditional crafting practices, and symbolic meanings.

The second day began with a visit to the local Taulavuori farm, where participants met the animals and the farm owner. The visit provided an opportunity to discuss the issues around native sheep, learn about Kainuu Grey, and feel the wool yarn the owner got from their wool. Participants got a chance to meet the sheep and participate in the shearing process (Figure 3). Following the farm visit, the programme continued with a lecture by Anu Pentti entitled *Finnsheep Wool – Soft Words*



▲ **FIGURE 4.** Naturally dyed yarn produced and presented by a family engaged in small-scale sheep keeping in Muodoslompola. Photograph: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.



▲ **FIGURE 5.** A participant weaving a band during the meditative weaving workshop. Photograph: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.



FIGURE 6. Collaborative design session. Photograph: Tatiana Kravtsov, 2024.

about Wool. The lecture offered insights into the challenges along with a growing awareness and appreciation of Finnish wool at both the local and national levels, whilst also emphasising the need for collaboration and innovative approaches to bring Finnish wool closer to local communities.

The daily programme was further enriched by a presentation from one of the participants, Krista Wright, with a research background in archaeological textiles and natural dyes. She shared her expertise by presenting examples of her experimental work and offering insights into natural dyeing practices, with a focus on red hues traditionally derived from alder. This was followed by a visit from a couple based in Muodoslompola who are engaged in small-scale sheep keeping, yarn production, and natural dyeing using locally-sourced plants and mushrooms. They shared their practical experiences and presented a rich palette of naturally dyed yarn (Figure 4).

Towards the evening, a creative workshop on meditative weaving in nature was facilitated by

Kravtsov. Participants were introduced to band weaving using rigid heddles, and invited to weave while physically and symbolically connecting the yarns to a tree. This practice encouraged a gentle moment of presence, fostering attentiveness to the tree, the wool, the weaving process, and the connection created between the weaver and the tree (Figure 5).

The collaboratively designed sessions, integrated into the workshop flow, were built on insights from the creative activities and lectures held throughout the workshop (Figure 6). The co-design sessions resulted in rich and dynamic discussions and led to the emergence of a variety of new ideas and conceptual directions towards understanding of wool as a material that mediates learning, embodiment, care, and connection to place. Rather than focusing solely on wool as a product material, participants emphasised its role in shaping experiences and practices that integrate cultural continuity and relationship with the environment.

Co-designed ideas and concepts

Multi-layered education on wool

- Educational Wool Package for daycare centres and schools that supports multidisciplinary and multisensory learning and provides knowledge of the origin and uses of wool.
- Transgenerational and cross-disciplinary woolcraft workshops: from grandmothers to kids, linking wool with history and biology.

Woolly Outdoor Life - activities and products

- *Wool Hike* – package to circular walk (sold from farm) for meeting woolly things on the way: petting sheep, wool meditation in the forest, hearing stories of sheep and nature connectedness, experiencing wool-crafts, and having the possibility to buy woollen products.
- Felt or sheepskin patches for clothes, heavy reinforcement for trackers' or snowboarders' knees and other parts of the body.

Empowering practices

- *Wool Hall*, a base and wool centre for wool enthusiasts, including residency, galleries, library, workshop places, co-design space, accessibility to all, and happy sheep milling around.
- *Wool Camp* – a happening to experience and learn holistic knowledge concerning wool and wool crafts.

Relaxation-related services

- *Silent Wool* – Kaamos hygge wool retreat with special moments by the fire and taking part in woolly activities. Concentrating on living in the rhythm of nature and with connection to rooting activities like wool sock walking, unperfect knitting, and covering yourself with wool to be in the moment.
- *Rooted knitting* – outdoor knitting covered in wool but with bare feet.

Earthy, free-spirited wool practices

- *Naked Knitting* – grounding practice by touching the wool with your whole body.
- *Wool Shock* – reality show where you save yourself from nudity by making your own clothes from the beginning by shearing, spinning, knitting, felting, etc. Raising the awareness of Finnish wool, Finnish wool is sexy.

Meditational woolly practices

- *VillaKieppi* – WoolNesting: a wintery forest meditation wrapped in felted wool.
- Knit and Felt DIY-package: a Sweetgrass pouch that protects you in the forest.

Ritual related products

- *Moonlit grass* – A Ceremonial White Sheepskin: from the name-giving ceremony to first steps, accompanying the person through life rituals and special moments, which you can mark on the back of the sheepskin.
- Woolly Amulet – traditional sheepskin printing with symbols to take with you as a reminder of some important thing in life.

Healing related products

- Wool set for winter swimmers: woollen hats and insoles as well as herbal tea for the moment.
- Wool set to feet with Juniper berry extract for recovery after hiking.