

TOGETHER

Traveling Exhibition Project

First Presentation: September 2027 in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, France, as part of the European Patchwork Meeting.

CONTEXT: Who contributes to Guldusi?

The Guldusi embroidery program has existed since 2004. Many individuals contribute to its continued existence and success:

- **The Deutsch-Afghanische Initiative (DAI) association in Freiburg:** With its dedicated staff, it is the responsible body. Without the association, Guldusi could not have been initiated or sustained.
- **The embroiderers in Afghanistan:** They have rediscovered their tradition and built a future upon it. They have become the breadwinners for their families—a rare reality in this country. For them, this is the most vital motivation for embroidering. Furthermore, it is hoped that this activity benefits their souls on a sensitive, subconscious level: the play with colors fosters creativity. The embroideries serve as an expression of what they cannot and may not put into words. May they gain a sense of peace and inner stability from it.

There are many stages to navigate from the production of the embroideries in Afghanistan to the sales offerings in Europe.

- **Travel:** Several times a year, trips are made to Afghanistan, supported by local staff who, from a pragmatic perspective, take significant risks.
- **Processing in Freiburg:** Once the embroideries arrive on German soil, a series of activities begins in Freiburg. For roughly one week, a group of friends from Freiburg and the surrounding area works from morning till night. We eat lunch together in a cheerful atmosphere before returning to work. The embroidered cloths must be separated, ironed, cut, and packed; larger pieces are finished with an overlock stitch, and cloths and threads are prepared for the next journey. Additionally, models are sewn as examples and motivation for how the embroideries can be used.
- **Promotion:** Other women engage individually or in teams at trade fairs—traveling, providing information, selling embroideries, and sharing their enthusiasm.
- **The Customers:** Finally, the customers complete the process and keep it alive: without their purchases, the embroiderers could not be paid. Their purchases result in practical objects that enrich daily life but can also become art.

In short, after so many years, Guldusi owes its existence to a vast community of supporters who engage out of solidarity in many different ways.

Is this not exactly what the world needs right now: to acknowledge others and support them in their time of need?

Together, we manage to keep Guldusi alive. Appropriately, the Europe-wide contest is titled "**TOGETHER.**" In "**TOGETHER,**" the embroideries serve as the inspiring starting material for a collective work of art.

TERMS AND CONDITIONS FOR PARTICIPATION IN "TOGETHER"

Wettbewerb « TOGETHER »,
aus dem Guldusi Stickprogramm bei der Deutsch-Afghanischen Initiative, Freiburg, Deutschland – www.guldusi.com

- **Participation:** The work must be created by at least three (3) participants; there is no upper limit. Corresponding to the number of participants, at least the same number of embroideries must be incorporated. Eligible countries are those of the European Union (EU) and Switzerland.
- **Serial Works:** Works in a series may participate—i.e., individual pieces that, when combined, form a recognizable overall work. In this case, all individual pieces must have exactly the same dimensions.
- **Theme:** There is no predetermined theme; however, the chosen theme should be recognizable, ideally conveyed through the title.
- **Dimensions:** There are no fixed dimensions, except that the total work must not exceed 2 meters in height.
- **Techniques:** All textile techniques are permitted, performed by hand or machine; the addition of non-textile materials is allowed.
- **Durability:** As the exhibition will travel, every work should be durable, flexible, and easy to transport. Please do not submit fragile works, works mounted in frames, or works under glass. The pieces must not be utilitarian objects (e.g., clothing or bags).
- **3D Works:** Three-dimensional works may be accepted; however, they will likely only be presented for the first exhibition at the European Patchwork Meeting in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines.
- **Materials:** Both the cotton embroideries from Laghmani and the silk embroideries from Herat may be used. For the sake of aesthetics, please use either only cotton or only silk embroideries—do not combine different material qualities within one work.
- **Shapes:** Over the years, the original square shape has been expanded. Today, various shapes are embroidered: rectangles, borders, ovals (leaves), and motifs embroidered freely on larger surfaces (e.g., hands, fish). All these, including the squares, can be combined.
- **Inspiration:** If you are looking for specific series, you can check the "Together" gallery in the online shop. Exciting, cohesive embroideries have been collected here and can be purchased as series. May they inspire you! Purchasing these embroideries does not obligate you to participate in the contest.
- **Submissions:** It is possible to send more than one group application, and more than one application per group may be accepted.
- **Originality:** Each work must be an original; potential sources of inspiration should be cited. Works must not have been previously presented in a supra-regional exhibition, nor published on the internet, in a catalog, book, or magazine.
- **Hanging:** For hanging purposes, an 8 cm wide tunnel must be attached to the back along the top edge (ending 2 cm before the left and right edges). On the bottom right, a fabric label must be attached with the names of all participants, a contact address (including country), a contact telephone number (including country code), the names of the Afghan embroiderers, and the title of the work (preferably in English). As works may be hung freely from the ceiling, the back should be impeccably finished. Rods will be provided by the organizers.

Copyright: All rights to the work remain with the artists. By sending digital photos, participants agree to their use for press and promotional purposes, as well as distribution on the internet for non-commercial purposes.

Sales: Works may be offered for sale. The artist group determines the sale price. The stated price does not include a commission for the organizers. The organizers act as intermediaries; purchase inquiries will be forwarded to the artist via email. The DAI e.V. thanks you in advance for any potential donation following a successful sale.

JURY

Wettbewerb « TOGETHER »,
aus dem Guldusi Stickprogramm bei der Deutsch-Afghanischen Initiative, Freiburg, Deutschland – www.guldusi.com

For this unusual competition appealing to collective collaboration, a unique jury has been assembled. Representing everyone involved with Guldusi, the team of helpers from Freiburg will serve as the jury; everyone will have an equal vote. Some of us have experience in international competitions or have previously served on juries. Among the Guldusi contributors in Freiburg who have made a name for themselves in the textile scene are **Pascale Goldenberg, Elsbeth Nusser-Lampe, Monika Sebert, and Isabelle Wiessler**, all of whom have agreed to judge. All other friends are skilled with needle and thread, experienced in fabric processing, and possess a keen aesthetic eye.

The jury represents a synergy of diverse competencies and the positive "fabric-history-feeling" of a team that has been familiar with Guldusi for two decades.

The jury will focus on the following criteria:

- **Originality:** Have the Afghan embroideries been incorporated imaginatively and respectfully?
- **Composition:** Has a harmonious collective work been created?
- **Technical Execution.**

Up to 40 works will be accepted.

CALENDAR

1. Submission of applications by May 31, 2027. Applications must be submitted via email to: **together_guldusi@gmx.de**. Please include: 1 digital photo of the full view + 2 digital photos of detailed views (no color filtering/editing), totaling 3 images. Photos should be on a black or white background and of good quality! We only accept high-resolution photos (between 2 and 5 MB per image) in JPEG format. The jury decides primarily based on these photos; therefore, photo quality is extremely important. Paper prints are not required.

Please label your photos with the Surname + First Name of the contact person and the country abbreviation (e.g., Smith, Jane, UK). One name represents the team. **Do not send any physical work until you have been notified of the jury's decision.**

We thank **Gisela Pugni-Spatz**, who will register the applications and send a confirmation upon receipt. She will replace names with numbers to ensure anonymity for the jury. If you have questions, please contact Gisela directly (in German, French, or English) at the email address above.

2. End of June 2027: Applicants will be informed of the jury's decision via email. Selection considers the exhibition as a whole; if several very similar applications are received, a selection will be made among them, even if all are of high quality.

3. By July 31, 2027: Deadline for the physical arrival of the selected works. Send to: **Pascale GOLDENBERG, Hofackerstr. 7 – D- 79110 Freiburg, Germany.**

4. First Exhibition: European Patchwork Meeting in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, Alsace, France, mid-September 2027. There will be no award ceremony or "audience favorite" vote.

5. Further Exhibitions: Planned for 2028; works will be returned thereafter.

FINANCING

Wettbewerb « TOGETHER »,
aus dem Guldusi Stickprogramm bei der Deutsch-Afghanischen Initiative, Freiburg, Deutschland – www.guldusi.com

Entry fees, payment for Afghan embroiderers, shipping costs.

- Participants cover the cost of purchasing one or more embroideries; at least one embroidery per participant. Shipping costs for the embroideries are borne by the participant. The "Together" gallery is regularly stocked with special original series.
- Shipping costs for your artwork (sending and return) are your responsibility. These vary by country and shipping method (insured/uninsured). Details will be provided with the jury results.
- A **€10 fee** (in the form of a banknote) must be included with each accepted or sent textile work. This amount helps cover the costs of the traveling exhibition.

RISKS AND INSURANCE

Please note: During transport within Europe between exhibition venues, during the exhibitions themselves, and while the works are in storage, they are **not insured**, with the exception of the first exhibition in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, where the organizer provides insurance.

Pascale Goldenberg and the various organizers will proceed with the utmost care to minimize risks (in storage, transport, unpacking, and hanging). All exhibitions are generally supervised.

"Working in and with Afghanistan involves personal risks. The issue of insurance for an object becomes irrelevant. Accepting risks is part of the concept of this traveling exhibition." — Pascale Goldenberg

By registering, the group agrees to the full set of regulations.

Freiburg, April 2026