

Guldusi-Newsletter

August 2019

by
Pascale Goldenberg



Waheda

I have just returned from a successful and pleasant journey, under good weather conditions. The previous journey to Afghanistan, end of February to beginning of March was undertaken by Margreth. She travelled to villages that suffered from very different weather conditions: two and a half days of ceaseless snowfall. The embroiderers did not leave their houses and were waiting for the snowfall to end – a time of waiting for Margreth, too. And then they all came at once: a group, too large to accomplish satisfying work in the remaining time. It took hours of sitting on the cold and damp floor to manage the workload. And the nights had to be spent sleeping more or less right on the floor. Thanks, Margreth! Her photo shows the men removing the heavy, wet snow to prevent any damage to the houses.

Foto: Margreth Rössler-Wacker



No Afghan woman complains about the snow, as it provides sufficient water. It is imperative to replenish the water resources – the groundwater-level is decreasing dramatically, a situation that is already far more alarming than in Europe. In this situation, Afghans demonstrate one of their most profound virtues: patience in dealing with a situation that cannot be changed!

Sandali – the heating under the table

Last time I presented the *sandali* system that is used to keep warm during the cold season. With the December delivery, Feriba sent us a number of pictures to demonstrate this technique:

- 1: When the embers in the metal vessel under the table have cooled, the quilt is taken down.
- 2: The handle-less broom, *djorub*, is used for cleaning, the *toshkas*, mats, 6 – 8 cm high, are taken away for this.
- 3: The burned embers are discarded and replaced.
- 4: Using the heat.



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Environment



Nazifa

With these images, we leave winter behind. However, I want to present one more embroidery that I received six months ago, an extraordinary document: Nazifa has created the image of a man in a polling station. It seems she saw some posters promoting the parliamentary elections. (The presidential elections, where new turmoils are expected, have been postponed to September.) the two words neshan und namsad, meaning ‘sign’ and ‘candidate’, will be a request to vote for the candidate chosen. This piece is to remind you that we are encouraging our embroiderers on the one hand to preserve the traditional craft of embroidery (e.g. floral or geometrical designs), but on the

other hand to be inventive and creative, by allowing us to participate in the things that are important to them in their everyday lives.

I'm using spring (and now, summer) to show you these pictures, taken by Khaled last year, when pupils of the girls' school in Laghmani painted a part of the outer wall of their school.



The inscription means: *Peace in the laughter of the children. They are the mirror of our future. Knowledge and learning without self-determined free will are like a tree that does not get enough rain. Strong will is the pivot of the world, leading you to success.*



Sadly, these murals do not exist any longer, as the wall was torn down to build a new, stronger one that is part of three new classrooms. Khaled is supervising the building activities and DAI have provided the funding. Building and maintaining 13 schools, as well as sponsorship of about 200 children attending schools are, together with the embroidery programme, the prominent activities of our initiative. School projects and sponsorships are funded through donations, while the two embroidery programmes are of a commercial nature and fund themselves. You can find more information on the website of [Deutsch-Afghanische Initiative \(DAI\)](http://www.dai.de).

Paradise of birds



These *harbingers of progress* remind me of swallows announcing summer, in particular because I can now present a new gallery offering embroidered [birds](#) for sale. A German friend, a specialist in ornithology, gave me pictures of 15 native birds of Afghanistan. Actually, Afghan birdlife is not so much different to ours in Europe. The pictures were arranged in various groups and given to about ten selected embroiderers. We were surprised by the results. While Tamana and Frosan pictured their birds in a very naturalistic way, others surprised us with their extremely imaginative creations.

This experience prompted us to request bird embroideries from 200 embroiderers, and so whole flocks of colourful bird embroideries keep flying our way. Therefore, I am inviting you to this virtual exposition. Hoping you will find some birds that you like.

Afghans are passionate about bird song, especially the nightingale's. They will spend a fortune on a nightingale if it sings particularly beautifully. A tradition among the musicians from Herat says that a bird that sits down on a musician's instrument while he is playing will grant him a moment of special grace.
Quote from AFRANE, no. 164, March 2019



Khowaida

Next dates



By the way, sales from our [online shop](#) are only a small part of our overall sales. Our most successful sales opportunities are specialised trade-fairs to which we are frequently invited, especially in France and Luxembourg. The next one is [Carrefour Europeen du Patchwork in mid-September in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines](#), Alsace, France. There, in the church of Sainte-Croix, we will present the excellent exhibition [The Dialog of the Flowers](#), the result of three years' experience. The embroiderers were inspired by pictures showing totals or details of quilts from the German artist Elsbeth Nusser-Lampe. The quilts and embroideries will be presented in a contrasted comparison, like a dialogue or an echo. You can find all relevant information [here](#).

Competitive exhibitions are another pillar of the embroidery programme; at which we are also able to sell exhibits and other embroidery pieces. Exhibitions are frequently borrowed by museums; this increases the number of interested people, which is essential for the continuation of the embroidery programme. In June, the travelling exhibition [Gardens Around the World](#) ended after three years. At the moment, the [documentary exhibition](#) is travelling, as well as [Keep Your Eye on the Planet](#), [COW-andMORE](#) and “A Tulip Is a Tulip Isa Tulip”. In Benediktbeuren the exhibition HERBST will be shown in September. You can find details about future events in our [event's calendar](#).

And here I would like to announce the forthcoming European Competition:



HAND in HAND

Hands ... they give, take, beg, pray, speak, show, greet, nurse, coddle, and much more. They can be violent or gentle, and they can be designed artistically.

For this new project, another new gallery has been created at the online shop. Maybe you will find inspiration there? The first exhibition is scheduled for September 2021.

You can find all relevant information about competition requirements [online](#).

15-years of Guldusi!

This journey was an occasion for discretely celebrating the fifteenth anniversary of the Laghmani embroidery project. We abandoned our first idea of celebrating this occasion with an appropriate festivity, inviting all the embroiderers that had ever participated, as well as representatives from the villages. Instead, we decided to give gifts to the current embroiderers: Small parcels with embroidery needles and pencils for drawing on the fabrics. Khaled said it was a bad idea and too dangerous to get hundreds of people together in one day. Now we hope this programme will still exist in another five years, and that safety conditions will then allow us to hold a really great celebration.

I wish you a beautiful summer with many good encounters

Greetings,
Yours
Pascale Goldenberg



leaves you can find in our online-shop in the gallery [Forest For Ever](#)

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