

ABEGG-STIFTUNG

Media Release, September 2025

19 SEPTEMBER TO 9 NOVEMBER 2025
OPEN DAILY FROM 2 P.M. TO 5.30 P.M.



TWO EARLY MODERN WOOL EMBROIDERIES CONNECTED TO SWITZERLAND

There is a duck paddling along a river and behind it white buildings with bright red roofs in front of snow-capped mountains, while in the foreground two women tenderly embrace. This is the idyllic scene depicted on a wool embroidery from the collection of the Abegg-Stiftung. Now, for a brief period, it is to go on show in the permanent exhibition alongside another embroidery from the Riggisberg museum's storage room.

The two embroideries date from around 1600, and to judge by their coats of arms come from Schaffhausen and southern Germany. The materials used to make them, in addition to wool, include linen, cotton, silk and metal threads. Such embroideries served to decorate interiors, whether as wall hangings, cushion covers, bed valences or table carpets. The second half of the sixteenth century was a period of growing prosperity that made itself apparent in the manufacture of textile objects for use as soft furnishings. Both pieces were probably embroidered by women belonging to urban upper-class families.

Like most such wool embroideries, the two works in the Abegg-Stiftung show scenes from the Bible. The depictions are beautifully detailed and done in a wide range of colours. Yet the content of the scenes also played a role. The owners were able to identify with the virtues and actions of the characters depicted and wanted to advertise this to the world. Thus the moral messaging, combined with the embroidered coats of arms and the costliness of the materials, underscores the textiles' purpose as status symbols, affording us an exciting glimpse of the world inhabited by what was then the urban elite.

Both press release and photo are available as e-mail attachments.

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Caption:

Detail of a wool embroidery showing the Visitation of the Virgin Mary to her cousin Elizabeth, Schaffhausen or southern Germany, late sixteenth century, Abegg-Stiftung, inv. no. 924.

The special exhibition «**FLOURISHING INDIA – TEXTILES FROM THE MUGHAL EMPIRE**» will remain open until 9 November 2025.