

INLAID PATCHWORK IN EUROPE FROM 1500 TO THE PRESENT

The Austrian Museum of Folk Life and Folk Art in Vienna is currently staging an exhibition of close to forty objects made with the unusual technique of inlaid patchwork, also known as cloth mosaic or 'intarsia'. Only fulled woollen cloth can be used for inlaid patchwork as it allows sections to be cut to a pattern, without fraying, and then patched into place the way a mosaic is created.

Pictorial designs often rely on classic applique techniques as well, which are easier to do than the inlay technique as there is no need to cut out negative shapes and the sewing is less complicated. Some of the exhibited works combine both techniques, used in combination. A variety of embroidery stitches are involved, often to join the dovetailed sections.

Countries such as Great Britain, Germany, Austria, Poland, Switzerland and Sweden as well as Ireland, the USA and Australia are represented. This is the first time these pieces have been made available to the public.

The show, which opened in October 2009 and continues until 14th March 2010, represents a collaboration with the Museum Europäischer Kulturen der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. In addition to the exhibition pieces, there are explanations of cultural and historical connections, design sketches, pattern books and historical documents of the time. *Information from Erika Karasek and Christina Werner, and from Gisela Bruseberg's writing about the techniques of inlaid patchwork.*

Below, WAPPENTUCH DER SCHNEIDERINNUNG, Schlesien (?) 1726, 137 x 132cm; fulled woollen fabric, silk and linen. In the collection of the Austrian Museum of Folk Art, Vienna. At right, STUCKWERK BERLIN – STUCKWERK EUROPA, 2008/2009, made by Ursel Arndt, 360 x 120cm. Collection of the Museum Europäischer Kulturen der Staatlichen Museen zu Berlin. A catalogue is available: <http://www.volkskundemuseum.at>

