

ABEGG-STIFTUNG

Media Release, September 2024

17 SEPTEMBER TO 10 NOVEMBER 2024
OPEN DAILY FROM 2 P.M. TO 5.30 P.M.



GOLD, SILK, GLUE.

AN EMBROIDERED ALTARPIECE AND THE STORY OF ITS CONSERVATION

The large embroidered altarpiece that will go on show at the Abegg-Stiftung for a limited period this autumn promises visual pleasure to those who look carefully, making it very much of a piece with this year's special exhibition. Our first impression of it is likely to be deceptive, in that the quality of this exceptionally fine and artfully done embroidery is obscured by its poor state of preservation. The triptych, consisting of a central panel flanked by two side panels, shows the Adoration of the Magi (centre), the Virgin's Adoration of the Child (left), and the Presentation in the Temple (right). The iconography and the composition of the scenes are modelled on Early Netherlandish panel painting.

The once magnificent appearance of the altarpiece has been seriously impaired, mainly as a result of the inexperienced conservation undertaken in the 1960s. It was then that loose metal threads and even some parts of the work that were only potentially at risk were glued back onto the linen ground with liberally applied synthetic adhesives. This glue has since aged and has caused the embroidery materials to age with it, meaning that the adhesive can no longer simply be removed. Consequently, once the Abegg-Stiftung had purchased the triptych in 2008, its conservators began testing various conservation methods to remove the adhesives. The exhibition includes short films explaining the difficulties posed by the conservation of this remarkable altarpiece, as well as the scenes that it depicts, and the embroidery techniques used.

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

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Caption:

Embroidered altarpiece (detail), Southern Netherlands, early 16th century, embroidery with silk and metal threads on a linen ground, 121 x 210 cm, Abegg-Stiftung, inv. no. 5581

The special exhibition «**THE DECEIVED EYE – TEXTILE EFFECTS AND THEIR SIMULATION**» will remain open until 10 November 2024.