



Carrefour
European
Quilt Show

Press Kit



www.patchwork-europe.eu

@carrefour_patchwork

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1- Over 30 years showcasing the finest in textile art

What is patchwork?

Endless creative freedom: Simply put, **patchwork is simply the act of sewing several pieces of fabric together**. Patching a hole in a pair of jeans? That's patchwork!

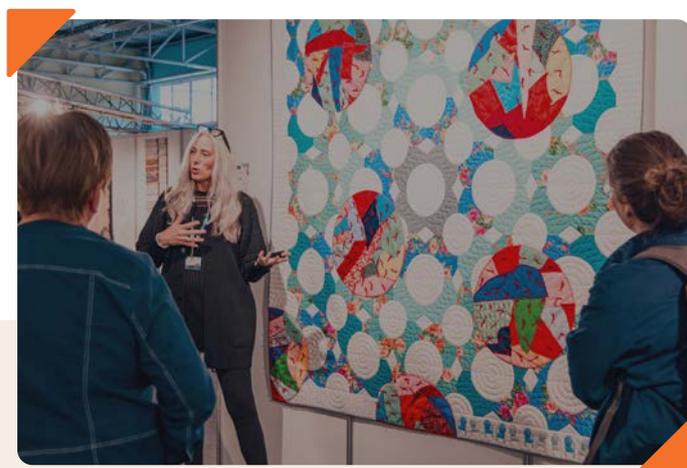
A **quilt** is a patchwork piece to which batting has been added for thickness and texture, along with a backing fabric. This allows the three layers of material to be sewn together: the top, the batting, and the backing.

Quilts evolve alongside the women (and man) who make them. Today, we can identify many different styles, from traditional bedcovers, which often require over 1,000 hours of meticulous work to minimalist contemporary pieces where design takes precedence over stitching.

Whether modern, old-school, or mixed media (which combines fabrics with other materials to create resolutely contemporary works that will never be

placed on a bed), **patchwork surprises, moves, and fascinates**. Far more than a traditional craft, it has become a fully-fledged artistic language: narrative, socially engaged, abstract, or monumental. Through fabric, artists from all walks of life weave connections, tell stories, and question the world.

Every year, the small towns of Val d'Argent, along with numerous international artists and visitors, pay tribute to this deeply human art form one that is both deeply rooted and daring.



An unforgettable festival of colors and textures

Since its beginning in 1995, Carrefour - The European Quilt Show has continuously carried forward a legacy: that of an art form that unites, a heritage that is passed down, and a passion that constantly reinvents itself.

Thirty years later, Carrefour has established itself as an essential pillar of the global textile scene. A vibrant space for knowledge sharing, wonder, and creation. It is driven by a team of event professionals, supported by a dynamic and multidisciplinary network of local associations.

Nestled in the heart of the picturesque Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines valley. A region rich in history, craftsmanship, and soul. **Carrefour has become the largest gathering in Europe for textile art enthusiasts.**



A living art form, far removed from clichés

Here, fabric becomes a language. Whether guided by traditional wisdom or contemporary design, patchwork speaks to everyone. It is accessible, unrestricted, and generous. It transcends ages, backgrounds, and cultures. It unites and brings people together with a shared understanding: **far more than just bedcovers, modern patchwork pieces now rightfully belong on walls!** Welcome to this vibrant, creative, and intergenerational celebration. It is a world of threads where every fabric tells a story, every stitch connects cultures, and every artwork serves as a bridge between the past and the future.



2- Val d'Argent, the Birthplace of the Amish

A look back

Let us travel back to the **16th century**. The Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines valley, known today as **Val d'Argent**, was divided into two halves: one belonging to Lorraine and the other to Alsace, with the border naturally defined by the local waterways.

While Lorraine side remained Francophone and Catholic, the Alsatian side became Protestant alongside its rulers,

the powerful Ribeaupierre lords.

Threatened and subsequently persecuted in their native Switzerland, several waves of **Anabaptist Mennonites** (pacifist Protestants) were welcomed into **Val d'Argent**. At the time, the valley was actively seeking to repopulate its villages following the cessation of its mining activities.



Amish farmer in Pennsylvania / Etienne Athéa

Attracted by the religious tolerance of this unique valley and the fertility of the land, **the Mennonite congregation integrated into the local population**, sometimes abandoning their agricultural customs in favor of jobs in town.

In **1693**, a dissenting voice rose up, advocating for a return to a simple and isolated life; it was that of the Swiss preacher **Jacob Amman**, who founded the first Amish community on the heights of **Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines**. According to his conviction, the Christian assembly had to live by drawing inspiration from the principles found in the Bible,

exactly as they were understood and adopted by the early pastors of the congregations.

This Christian community, identified under the name «Amish,» is more akin to a religious order than a traditional church. This is due to the mutual aid and discipline actively and voluntarily practiced within the group, which fundamentally distinguishes it from other churches.

During the French Revolution, **the introduction of compulsory military service precipitated the emigration of the Amish**, who were strictly pacifist, to the New

World. Those who remained in Europe gradually joined the more progressive Mennonite movement, a process that continues to this day.

The fact remains that **the Amish movement**, now well-established in Pennsylvania and other North American states and regions, was born from the precepts of **Jacob Amman** during his time living in **Alsace, in Val d'Argent**.

Origins of the show

Carrefour - The European Quilt Show was born after the 1993 celebrations of the 300th anniversary of the Amish movement by the French Association of Anabaptist and Mennonite History. The very first quilts exhibited in Val d'Argent were hung as decorations on the walls of the Municipal Theater of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, the venue for anniversary symposium marking birth of Amish.

The patchwork pieces were original Amish works, brought back from the

United States by the Swiss collector Jacques Légeret.

It was indeed **through contact with British colonists that the Amish, who began arriving in Pennsylvania in 1737, discovered patchwork.** Repurposing, sharing, and meticulous attention to detail: Amish women recognized the practical value of patchwork, embraced its underlying principles, and devoted themselves to this craft. They worked individually at first, and then gathered in groups for the final quilting stages.

Since its inaugural edition in 1995, Carrefour has paid tribute to Amish quilts every year, while simultaneously spotlighting modern and contemporary textile art from across the globe. At Carrefour, quilts are never just pieces of fabric sewn together; they are bridges between continents, connecting centuries-old traditions with vibrant avant-garde movements.



Amish buggy / Pays d'Art & d'Histoire du Val d'Argent

Val d'Argent - the soul of Carrefour

Every autumn, over the course of four days, Val d'Argent transforms into a veritable open-air gallery, staying true to its spirit of transmission, discovery, and sharing. **Since its creation in 1995, Carrefour - The European Quilt Show has taken over the small towns of Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines, Sainte-Croix-aux-Mines, Lièpvre, and Rombach-le-Franc.** It metamorphoses no fewer than 18 locations into exhibition spaces: churches, community halls, heritage buildings... all reinvented to host textile artworks from around the world.

This unmissable event seamlessly blends cultural heritage with contemporary creations, offering visitors an exceptional panorama of fiber art in all its forms. Its geographical location at the crossroads of France, Germany, and Switzerland gives the show a resolutely European scope. Here, enthusiasts gather in a spirit of curiosity and conviviality.

Driven by dedicated professionals, committed volunteers, and locals who are proud of their region, Carrefour is much more than an artistic event: it is a human adventure woven with passion and exchange.

Throughout the festival, the valley comes alive to the rhythm of patchwork. Cafes and restaurants become meeting places where people share tips, anecdotes, and their favorite textile pieces. Strolling from one exhibition to the next also means discovering narrow streets lined with half-timbered houses, artisan boutiques, and traditional bakeries. Between its mining past and its textile heritage, Val d'Argent reveals the deep roots of its creative calling at every turn.



3- Carrefour - The European Quilt Show

Key figures

- **4,500 sqm** of vendor area, free to access for all
- **15,000 visitors** expected annually
- **30 years of fun between fibers artists**
- Over **1,100 artworks** on display
- More than **35 artists** from all over the world **each year**
- A vibrant scene of contemporary textile expression spread across **18 exhibition venues**
- **4 small towns:** an artistic discovery as well as a sightseeing experience
- Around **40 nationalities** represented

A major exhibition

Ranked among **the top three textile art events worldwide**, Carrefour - The European Quilt Show offers a **wide array of textile artworks** every year. From patchwork and embroidery to mixed media, dyeing, crochet, and lace: all forms of textile art come together for four days of creative frenzy.

The artistic program is entirely renewed each year. While some venues may host specific artists for several editions, the artworks displayed are always different. Exclusivity and the premiering of new works

are two core values that have cemented the event's reputation since 1995. **Leading figures in quilting and major institutions have previously exhibited or participated in the event**, including Carolyn L. Mazloomi, Nancy Crow, Victoria Findlay Wolfe, Paula Nadelstern, Libs Elliott, Luke Haynes, SAQA, the International Quilt Museum, Quilt National, and many others.



On-site: inspiration and a multitude of activities

Artworks from all corners of the globe. Flamboyant colors, sleek patterns, bold shapes, and powerful messages. Established, internationally renowned artists exhibit alongside the very first pieces made by passionate beginners.

At Carrefour, we celebrate. But above all, we pass on knowledge. Classes, workshops, seminars, and lectures. Here, time-honored techniques are taught, new methods are mastered, perspectives intersect, and emotions are shared.



Workshops

A rich and diverse selection of classes awaits you, providing the perfect opportunity to learn, share, find inspiration, and connect with fellow enthusiasts. Whether working by hand or with a machine, take full advantage of this experience to explore new techniques alongside passionate instructors. **Workshops are available for all skill levels.**



Retreats

A dedicated classroom, intensive days of work, a nearby hotel, and full board: all the ingredients for success come together in these **retreats**, which take the **form of multi-day workshops led by a featured artist.**

Between twenty and twenty-five participants from around the globe gather for these classes, creating a true melting pot of fabrics and needles. They

are all driven by a shared thirst for knowledge and drawn by the expert guidance of the artists.

Since the beginning of the retreat program, students have had the privilege of learning from **some of the biggest names in patchwork, including Nancy Crow, Luke Haynes, Carolina Oneto, and Libby Lehman.**

Lectures

Numerous free lectures enrich the program, addressing diverse themes such as the history of the Amish, the evolution of textiles, and quilting and patchwork techniques.

Attending a lecture is the perfect way to take a break between exhibition visits while benefiting from the insights of experts and artists from around the world, who have traveled here specifically to share their knowledge.

Whether delving into the history of patchwork, the textile heritage of Val d'Argent, the customs and traditions of quilters from the other side of the world, technical advice, or practical information, any reason is a good one to spend an hour in the first-floor hall of the Theater.



The international contest

Every **autumn**, the organizers of Carrefour - The European Quilt Show devise a new theme, launching a **fresh edition of the competition that is open to patchwork enthusiasts worldwide**. Participants have several months to design and create their pieces before submitting their applications in the spring. This contest serves as

an exceptional international showcase for quilters. **Three judges review all the submitted entries via photographs and select the 30 quilts** that best represent the year's theme while demonstrating outstanding craftsmanship.

30 finalists

In September, this exclusive selection is unveiled to the public at Carrefour. The awards ceremony is a major highlight, celebrating the artists and announcing the winners, which include the Grand Prix, the Public Choice Award, and various sponsor prizes, **totaling more than €20,000 in value.** Following the Carrefour,

the 30 selected pieces embark on a **10-month tour**, exhibiting in art galleries, museums, and patchwork events **worldwide**. This provides a unique opportunity for artists to showcase their work on an international stage.

The exhibitions from past editions of the competition have already been hosted in prestigious venues, including:

- **Australia:** Australasian Quilt Convention
- **Brazil:** Quilt Brasil
- **Korea:** Quilt Festival in Korea (QFiK)
- **Japan:** World Quilt Festival
- **United-States:** Dairy Barn Arts Center and the prestigious National Quilt Museum in Paducah
- **New Zealand:** Great New Zealand Quilt Show
- **Czech Republic:** Brno Patchwork Meeting

The artworks have also been exhibited in **Italy, Spain, Russia, and South Africa**, thereby reinforcing **the international impact of the Carrefour's annual competition.**



The 2024 "Ocean" International Competition at AQC, Melbourne (Au"stralia)"

Visitors from around the world and local fabric enthusiasts gather in the halls of the Vendor Area located in Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines. There, they discover nearly 100 booths featuring specialized exhibitors, designers, publishers, and fabric suppliers from all corners of the globe.

The world's leading brands in the needlecraft and fiber art industry set up shop from Thursday to Sunday. They occupy both indoor and outdoor booths, making it convenient to spot the latest trends and stock up for future projects.

Public access to the vendor areas is free every day. However, to access the exhibitions, visitors will need to purchase a wristband through the ticketing office, available either on site or online.

online ticketing at
<https://patchwork-europe.eu>



Testimonials



Jocelyne (France): "This event is incredibly rich in discoveries, sharing, and encounters between artists from all over the world. It is my breath of fresh air; I leave feeling energized and brimming with new projects."

Béatrice (France): "I attended for the first time last September and **was completely amazed by the quality and diversity of the exhibitions**, as well as the flawless organization. Moreover, **the artists are on site and incredibly approachable**. Pure joy. Not to mention the impressive scale of the commercial area."



Estela (Brazil): "Oh, what a joy it was to experience this Festival... **featuring such a wonderful diversity of nationalities**. The exhibitions were well-organized and filled with beautiful, meaningful artworks. I absolutely loved it... I highly recommend attending!"

Clara (Colombia/Switzerland): "I highly recommend it for the **caliber of the guest artists and their marvelous artworks, which are incredibly inspiring and enriching** due to the wide variety of techniques showcased. The diverse activities offered and the thematic competition perfectly round out the experience. Furthermore, the host venues are stunning and truly reflect the character of the region. I had a wonderful four-day stay, filled with countless encounters and special **moments centered around patchwork**, which fully justify the event's name: the 'Carrefour Européen du Patchwork'!"



Exhibition venues

Discover the four small towns hosting the exhibitions:

- Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines
- Sainte-Croix-aux-Mines
- Lièpvre
- Rombach-le-Franc

Parking:

- Each village offers parking areas close to the exhibition venues. Please consult the map to plan your travel.

ACCESS THE SHOW BY CAR:

- From **Mulhouse** or **Strasbourg**: take the A35 motorway, exit 17, then the RN59 towards Sainte-Marie-aux-Mines. From **Nancy** or **Saint-Dié**: take the RN59, then proceed either via Col de Sainte-Marie mountain pass or the Maurice Lemaire tunnel (toll applies).

BY TRAIN AND BUS:

- The **SNCF** (French National Railway Company) provides daily connections from Sélestat or Saint-Dié-des-Vosges train stations via the TER A20 bus line.
- **Free shuttles:** You will not need to drive once you arrive in Val d'Argent. The event's shuttle buses serve all four villages, arriving at each stop approximately every 20 minutes.

Accreditation, resources, and contact

Accreditation during the event

- **Would you like to cover the upcoming Carrefour Européen du Patchwork and get up close with the artists?**

Request your press badge! Subject to approval by our Communications department, it will be valid for all four days of the show, as well as for the classes and seminars.

Link to the accreditation form: <https://www.patchwork-europe.eu/press/>

- **Are you planning to write an article about the event and need content?**

Resources: In addition to this press kit, we have a photo database available to the media upon request.

- Would you like to propose an **interview**, a **lecture**, or a **podcast**? Contact us!
- Want to learn more about the classes and exhibitors in the commercial space?

For more information, **please visit our website:** <https://www.patchwork-europe.eu/>

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Institutional partners:



CARREFOUR EUROPÉEN DU PATCHWORK / CARREFOUR - THE EUROPEAN QUILT SHOW

An event organized by Événementiel en Val d'Argent
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