



SILK ROAD  
a paper journey

*Traveling Exhibition*



An unexpected journey into the heart of the legendary Silk Road, birthed in the imagination of an internationally famous artist.



A multi-sensory experience conjuring up extraordinary atmospheres, made entirely out of paper and hand-painted.

# Characteristics

**A minimum of 5 sumptuous paper decors depicting over 25 characters and dozens of objects fashioned out of paper.**

**A multi-sensory journey: 5 immersive audio atmospheres and 5 systems for olfactory diffusion, a workshop for exploring substances by touch ....**

**Other hyperrealist decors: the artist's library, portal into the world of paper.**

**A spectacular multimedia room with projection mapping, following the Silk Road today.**

**Genuine collectors' items to tell the story of the Silk Road.**

**A minimum surface area of 650 m<sup>2</sup>.**

**An entirely modular exhibition (with the possibility of adding further decors and adapting the collections according to the exhibition venue).**

**An exhibition designed to appeal to both adults and children.**

# The exhibition themes

## 1. The library workshop

1st paper decor: The weaver's workshop

## 2. The gods take to the Road

2nd paper decor: The caravan

## 3. The Road of empires

3rd paper decor: In the yurt

## 4. Stones, sheets of paper...metals

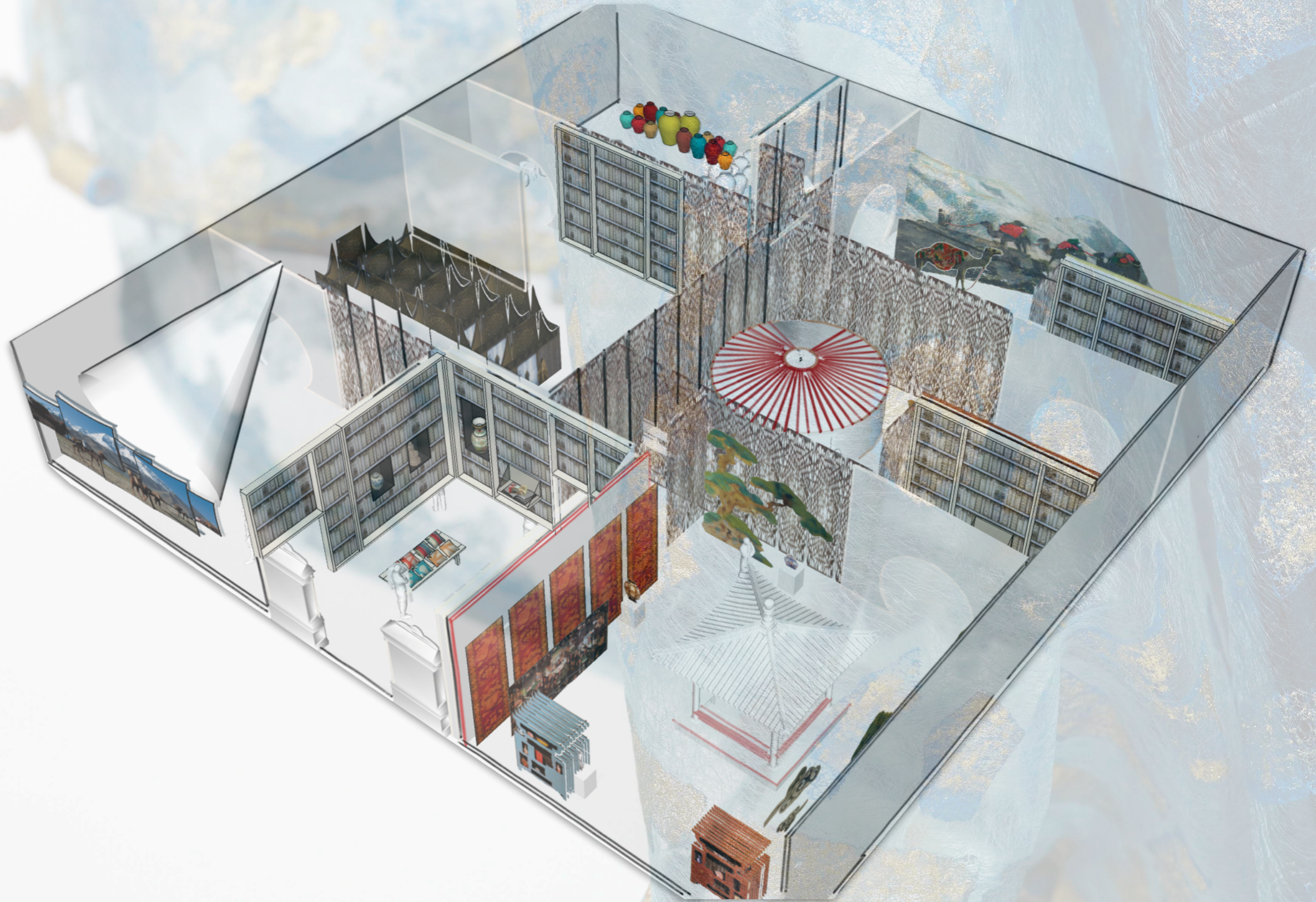
4th paper decor: Meet the Indian merchant

## 5. Dreams from East and West

5th decor: The Istanbul market

## 6. Final exhibition room: Tomorrow's Road - projection mapping





# The Exhibition Outline

## **Library 1: The workshop-library**

The Silk Road is not very aptly named. Firstly because there are numerous roads, over land and sea, that can lay claim to this title. Secondly because silk was transported there along with many other items: lacquer, jewelry, wine, spices, glass, etc. filled the camels' saddlebags, whilst ideas, religions and disease accompanied the caravan drivers. Tracing the different routes, a brief journey through the ages and, of course, a focus on the importance of silk, stirs the visitor's imagination in the first library which includes the oversized tools with which the artist needed to work. The time has come for Isabelle de Borchgrave to begin her journey. And for us to start ours.

## **1st paper decor: The weaver's workshop**

Everything starts with the silk. A weavers' workshop in a back street cluttered with bird cages. Young girls weave the threads, draw the motifs and fold the items that are ready to be transported.

## **Library 2: The gods take to the Road**

Zoroastrianism, Confucianism, Judaism, Nestorianism, Buddhism and Islam spread out over the centuries along the different routes. In this Library there are steles, models, sacred statuettes or manuscripts discovered by Stein and Pelliot in the caves of Dunhuang that recount the importance of these routes for the penetration and intertwining of Asia's religions.



Outline of one of the decors: 'the back street leading to the weavers' workshop'.

# The Exhibition Outline



Outline of one of the decors: 'the caravan'



Outline of one of the decors: 'In the yurt'

## 2<sup>nd</sup> paper decor: The caravan

Deserts and mountains, the two landscapes that the caravan drivers will face most of the way. The silhouettes of camels and merchants are highlighted here against the backdrop of a vast wilderness. The visitors walk alongside them. On one of the animals, a small corner of a silk item that caught our attention at the weavers' workshop is hanging out from the skin cover designed to protect it.

## Library 3: The Road of Empires

Chinese, Mongol, Turk, Persian, Russian...: every empire fought in these lands to control the trade routes whose geostrategic importance was clear to all. A tale of power and influence revealed in this library.

## 3<sup>rd</sup> paper decor: In the yurt

Stopping for the night in a yurt. The caravan drivers relax around a fire as the wind shakes the canvass. The merchandise, including our bundle of silk, is placed there under guard.

## Library 4: Stones, sheets of paper...metals

A library devoted to exchanges (other than religious ones). Silk was no doubt the pretext for opening trade routes to the West and was for a long time the principle merchandise exported by China. But other goods quickly followed the trails on the backs of camels or yaks: glass, paper, precious stones, metals, flax, wool, etc. This is a good opportunity to explore this ebb and flow of trade, monetary exchanges and the daily life of the caravan drivers.





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# The Exhibition Outline

## 4th paper decor: Meet the Indian merchant

Part of the merchandise took the road to the south, towards India. In this merchant's shop the silks are piled high, each more breathtaking than the others in the midst of the thronging crowd.

## Library 5: Dreams from East and West

This final library is reserved for those who have left behind relics from the Silk Road across the centuries. Those from China who travelled to the West; those in Europe who inspired generations with their tales of mysterious Asia. Books, paintings, plus photos, films and audio tracks will immerse the visitors 'from both sides of the Road' into a world of imagination or the prejudices- of the other.

## 5th decor: The Istanbul market

Another explosion of colors. Those of the materials of course, but also of the spices, the lamps, and a huge variety of objects. It's the end of the trade road, where East meets West.

## Finale: Tomorrow's Road

The visitor's final stage on the Silk Road is more focused on time than space. Isabelle's papers cover this venue where the visitor can discover what tomorrow's Road may resemble, a new link between the two extremities of Eurasia.



Outline of one of the decors: 'Meet the Indian market'



Outline of one of the decors: 'the caravan'



## An exhibition conceived in paper

Silk and paper have been associated with China for thousands of years. Belgian artist Isabelle de Borchgrave has sought to combine them in a unique exhibition: Silk Road, a paper journey. Not by writing a book, which has already been done many times over, but by recreating the world of the Silk Road in paper, her favored means of artistic expression. Step by step she leads us along the Road, but one which is personal, revisited in her imagination. In this way the visitor stops not in reconstituted places but in reconstructions -in paper- of what the Road evokes for the artist.

Just like Isabelle de Borchgrave, visitors to the exhibition begin their journey in a library. Several will be encountered during the visit, like introductory airlocks leading to the artist's work, drawn from fictional writing and eye-witness accounts. It is there that paper met silk. These libraries will also contain objects, as if emerging from the pages that relate the epic era of the Silk Road via different themes. They will also explain the artist's choice of venue, which the visitor will discover as they leave each of these libraries.

The heart of the exhibition is formed by paper spaces, the work of Isabelle de Borchgrave. It is this Road revisited by the artist which is the main attraction in its originality. The libraries are essentially there to provide a breathing space, a rhythm to the journey whilst providing, through their collectors' items, a certain historical overview.

The underlying thread is quite naturally- a silken one, or more specifically a silk cloth whose journey the visitor will follow from the Chinese weavers' workshop to the very threshold of Europe. It reappears in each decor, emblem of its progression in time and space.

This scenography makes the exhibition modular, varying according to the venues where it alights. The Road is long, famous or less well-known sites flood the imagination of the visitor as they did that of the artist. Different adaptations of the exhibition can attain the same quality and provoke the same interest. The Road outlined here is only one route amongst many possibilities.



# Isabelle de Borchgrave

*Isabelle de Borchgrave* has today become someone whose name is readily associated with the history of Fashion and paper.

Her work has been exhibited worldwide: in Venice, Florence, at the Château de Versailles, in Berlin, Istanbul, St Petersburg, San Francisco, Washington...

She has enabled hundreds of thousands of visitors to travel through time: from Queen Elizabeth 1<sup>st</sup> to Coco Chanel, in the Venetian world of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, the Renaissance in Florence or the Golden Era of the Russian Ballets.

But she also maintains close ties to the fashion industry and the world of design.

In collaboration with Hermès, Caspari, Target, Villeroy and Boch... Isabelle has used her imagination to create art that is accessible to all those who want dreams to fill their homes.





*Examples of collections from previous exhibitions*



*Examples of collections from previous exhibitions*





*Examples of collections from previous exhibitions*

# Tempora

Tempora is a Belgian agency for the conception, production, promotion and management of exhibitions and cultural equipment.

Founded in 1998, it is today one of the leading players in the European market.

Tempora has a multi-disciplinary team of around forty collaborators who offer all the skill-sets required to handle the production and management of projects which are entrusted to them: project leaders, managers, architects, graphic designers, scenographers, designers, archivists, multimedia experts...

Tempora has two outstanding features:

- **Its unique capacity to provide expert assistance**, which allows it to intervene during certain phases or to oversee entire projects from start to finish: creation, development and production of exhibitions, plus the promotion, welcome and management of the visiting public.
- **Its network of partners and its international experience in Europe, Asia and North America.**

Since its creation, the company has managed a number of high-profile projects, including both temporary events and permanent museum exhibitions.



„With time and patience the mulberry leaf becomes a silk gown“

随着时间的推移和耐心，桑树叶子会变成丝袍



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