

Presseinformation

Museum am Rothenbaum

Rothenbaumchaussee 64 | 20148 Hamburg
Germany | markk-hamburg.de

Steppes & Silk Roads

Duration: Until November 7, 2021



Splendid fabrics made of silk, tea and "wild apples" found their way to Europe via the myth-enshrouded trade routes of the Steppes and Silk Roads. The exhibition invites visitors to a multi-layered search for traces through history and the present and asks about the connections between the historical routes and the "New Silk Road". Historical objects, artworks and photographs are juxtaposed with contemporary artistic perspectives and the voices of various actors. In the form of an imaginary walk-through map, the exhibition invites visitors to trace movements between East and West and to make new surprising connections between themes and places.

Objects of desire

One of the possible paths that visitors can use to move through the exhibition follows the "Objects of Desire." Many of the historical exhibits reflect commercial interests as well as developments in the art market. At the same time, they speak of the exchange of ideas and skills between Asia and Europe as well as the networking of people along the trade routes. Thus, not only did silk reach Europe as a luxury good from China, but the origin of the wild apple as a predecessor of the apples cultivated in Europe also lies in Asia. In music and in many instruments from the Caucasus, connections can be traced to Xinjiang in China and beyond.

Objects of encounters

Other exhibits in the exhibition show in a special way the mutual inspiration and exchange between Asia and Europe. The valuable map *Tianxia Yutu* ("Depiction of the Entire Territory under Heaven") from the MARKK collection contains 25 hand-drawn maps of China's core provinces and border regions. It was created as part of one of the most extensive mapping projects in Chinese history, in which Chinese and European specialists worked closely together at the beginning of the 18th century. Among these "objects of encounters" are important works from the MARKK's East and Central Asia collections as well as outstanding loans from the Weltmuseum Wien, the Museum für Kunst und

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Gewerbe in Hamburg, the Stralsund Museum, the Völkerkundemuseum Heidelberg and the Austrian National Library.

Contemporary artworks

How historical objects from the collection are juxtaposed with recent artistic positions is impressively demonstrated, for example, by the works *"Scream"/Chapan* and *"Zar-devor"/Folkart* by the Uzbek artist Dilyara Kaipova, who critically examines the notions of Central Asian art traditions prevalent in Europe. Her textile works form a contemporary commentary on a presentation of historic ikat weavings and cloaks that were coveted collectibles along the historic Silk Roads. Mongolian artist Nomin Bold, who was present at documenta 14 in Kassel in 2017, made the painting *Time Link* for the exhibition. The overlapping layers of the collage-like work point to the link between past and present, and the meaning and commodification of symbols and things between Europe and Asia. Paul Kolling's series of works *Westbound-190621* on the "New Silk Road" explores the significance of infrastructure projects and enters into a dialogue with the historical map *Tianxia Yutu* ("Depiction of the Entire Territory under Heaven"). Both exhibits illustrate notions of the graspability of territory and point to China's sino-centric perspective. Other artistic works contributing to the exhibition include Khosbayar Narankhuu, Umida Akhmetova, Tatia Skhirtladze, Jack Wolf, Maria-Katharina Lang, and Christian Sturminger. The walk-through map of the exhibition was designed by Johannes Heuer.

Travelers & Collectors

The exhibition also explores the origins of the exhibits, the circumstances of their acquisition, and their paths into the museum collections. It reveals the stories and interests of individual collectors, who either acquired the objects through the art trade or themselves traversed the steppe and silk roads "in the footsteps of Marco Polo," whose journey to China in the 13th century continued to fascinate visitors for centuries. The artefacts from the MARKK came to the museum in the first half of the 20th century via Erdwin & Antonie Amsinck, the artist Lene Schneider-Kainer, the art historian Annie Mainz, the Hamburg art dealer J.M.P. Hermanns and the trading house Umlauff, and from the collection of Johanna Ploschitzki. The proportion of women collectors here is remarkable, as are their life stories. The Vienna-born artist Lene Schneider-Kainer, for example, travelled to Asia with the author Bernd Kellermann on behalf of the Berliner Tagblatt at the end of 1920 and had the art objects she brought back auctioned. The exhibition also tells the story of the Hamburg couple Erdwin and Antonie Amsinck, whose interest in art and travel took them as far as Bukhara and Tbilisi at the end of the 19th century, and who bequeathed their ethnographic "travel memories" to the museum after their death.

The concept and design of the exhibition were developed in the artistic-scientific research project *Dispersed & Connected*, led by Maria-Katharina Lang at the Austrian Academy of Sciences, together with Christian Sturminger. In this combination of current perspectives with historical material - ethnographic as well as archaeological objects and historical photographs - as well as contemporary artworks and current research documentation, surprising and hardly noticed stories are told.

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In cooperation with the research project "Dispersed & Connected" (project director Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang), funded by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF): <https://dispersedandconnected.net/en/>

With financial support from the Behörde für Kultur und Medien Hamburg and the Herbert-Pumplin Foundation. Restoration funding by the Ernst von Siemens Kunststiftung. With the support of the Friends of the Museum am Rothenbaum.

Concept & Design

Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang (Institute for Social Anthropology/ÖAW) and Mag. Christian Sturminger

Co-Curator MARKK

Rahel Wille, M.A. Ethnology

Cooperation partners and lenders

Institute for Social Anthropology/ Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW)
Weltmuseum Vienna/ KHM Museum Association
Museum for Arts & Crafts Hamburg
Ethnological Museum of the von Portheim Foundation Heidelberg
Austrian National Library Vienna
State Museum Hanover
Stralsund Museum
Center for Natural History Hamburg
State Archive Hamburg

Cultural Ministry of Mongolia
Mongolian Academy of Sciences
Mongolian University for Sciences and Technology
Kharkhorum Museum
Foreign Ministry and Cultural Ministry of Mongolia

Catalog

"Steppes and Silk Roads" ed. Maria-Katharina Lang, Rahel Wille
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360° tour of the exhibition: <https://markk-hamburg.de/steppen-seidenstrassen-virtueller-rundgang/>

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Quotations about the exhibition

Dr. Carsten Brosda, Senator for Culture and Media

"The historic Silk Road is one of the phenomena of world trade that shape and fascinate our world. It is not without reason that it is once again experiencing a renaissance today as a major infrastructure project. The historic trade route linked continents and cultures. It brought not only a two-way transfer of goods and knowledge, but also a profound cultural exchange. In times when we are used to ordering goods at the click of a button, it is all the more exciting to trace the origins of international trade, which brought our world closer together. Using historical objects and modern art, the exhibition shows the connections between cultural and technological development across borders, and thus also allows us to reflect on the perceptions of ourselves and others that shape our view of the world today."

Prof. Barbara Plankensteiner, Director MARKK

"With this exhibition, we are once again taking up a current topic and dealing with the historically rich geographical spaces that lie behind the much-vaunted "New Silk Road". The focus is on the people, their perspectives, interests, and the arts, resulting in a web of stories and connections that rivals the diversity of the trade routes commonly referred to as the Silk Road. We are pleased that by working with Maria-Katharina Lang, we can incorporate not only new insights from a current research project, but a wide variety of perspectives from the region and from Hamburg to expand our knowledge and understanding of this complex region and its material and artistic products."

Dr. Maria-Katharina Lang, Projektdirektorin & Kuratorin, ÖAW

"This exhibition was created as a different narrative, a reaction to the so-called "New Silk Road" within the framework of our research project *Dispersed&Connected*. The research team went to the back roads of the Silk Roads to document impacts of infrastructure projects on the ground, to give space to often less noticed local voices and to cooperate with artists*. Another significant part of the research took place in (museum) archives in Asia and Europe. This led to encounters with extraordinary objects, documents and collection histories. Thus, a new fragmentary narrative has formed from the juxtaposition of selected artifacts, historical documents, fieldwork documentation, and contemporary artworks. The MARKK now not only provides the appropriate space for this narrative, but rather the collection objects have essentially shaped it."

Rahel Wille, Co-Curator MARKK

"The exhibition preparations were an interesting journey for me into the historical collections: How is the theme represented there and what stories do the objects tell in this context? Among other things, previously hidden stories of female collectors came to light, such as those of the Hamburg art historian Annie Mainz or the artist Lene Schneider-Kainer. This is just one example, because the exhibition offers a variety of ways to approach the topic and selected exhibits and to view both in a new light."

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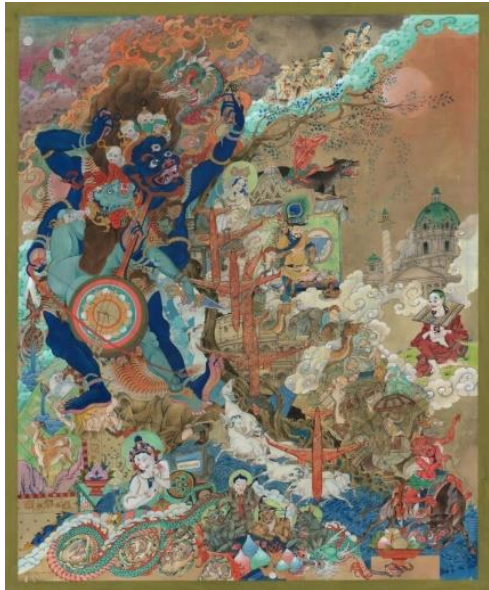
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Press photos: Steppes & Silk Roads



"Time Link"
Nomin Bold
Mongolia, 2020
Painting; old script sheets, acrylic, canvas.
Purchase sponsored by the Friends of the
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MARKK 2020.9:1
Dimensions L 245 cm, H 145 cm
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK



"Ten Grams"
Khosbayer Narankhuu, 2020
Watercolor on canvas
On loan from the artist
Dimensions 90 x 70 cm
Photo © Khosbayer Narankhuu/ Research
Project *Dispersed & Connected*



Chapan from the series "Scream"
Dilyara Kaipova
Uzbekistan, 2019
Ikat fabric, lined
Purchase sponsored by the Friends of the
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MARKK 2020.10:1
Dimensions H: 130 cm
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK

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"Scream", Chapan & "Zar-devor", Folk art
Dilyara Kaipova
Uzbekistan, 2019
Embroidered fabric
Purchase sponsored by the Friends of the
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MARKK 2020.10:2
Dimensions 45 x 350 cm
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK



Paul Kolling
Westbound-190621 Series (2020)
3 wall panels, each: 64m 35-mm film on
acrylic glass framed in ash object frames,
LED lighting, control electronics.
127.8 x 180.6 x 9 cm (W x H x D)
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK







Buddha head
Artist unknown
China, 14-17th century or later
Marble
MARKK 41.36:1
Dimensions: H (with base) 45 cm, W 17 cm,
D 22 cm
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK

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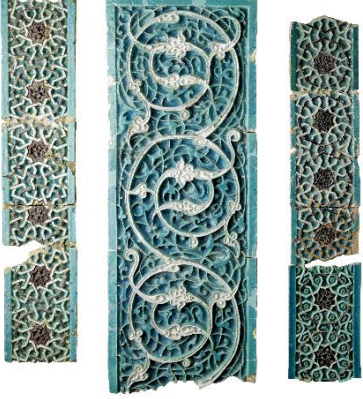


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	<p>Water pipe vessel Workshop unknown Iran, Safavid dynasty, ca. 15th-16th c. Quartz frit, painted in cobalt blue and black under transparent glaze Purchase from Elisabeth Hellebronth Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg 2004.197 Property of the Hamburg Art Collections Foundation Dimensions: H 29 cm, D 18 cm Photo © Jörg Arend/ Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe</p>
	<p>5 Musical instruments from the Caucasus maker unknown Georgia/ Caucasus, 19th century Purchase Adolf Dirr, 1912 / donation from the bequest of L. E. and H. M.A. Amsinck, 1922 MARKK 22.9:187; 12.81:19; 12.81:21; 22.9:186 a+b; 12.81:18 Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>
	<p>Lady's mantle <i>khalat</i> Uzbekistan, end of 19th century workshop unknown silk, cotton, wool Collection Fritz Willfort WMW VO_180542 Dimensions: H 122 cm, W 148 cm ©KHM Museum Association, World Museum Vienna, Photo: Alexander Rosoli</p>
	<p>Quilted cap with embroidery decoration and embroidered woven border maker unknown Uzbekistan, 19th c. cotton fabric, cotton yarn, sequins donation from the bequest of L.E. and H.M.A. Amsinck, 1922 MARKK 22.9:75 Dimensions: H 39 cm, D 20 cm Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>

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	<p>Facade fragments of the Buyan Kuli Khan mausoleum Workshop unknown Fatahabad (Bukhara), Chagatai Khanate, 1354 cut clay, underglaze decoration, quartz frit Acquisition Galerie Kalebdjian, Paris, France; gift from Alfred Beit, London, Great Britain Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg 1908.472 Dimensions: H 125 cm, W 59 cm © Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe</p>
	<p>Grave figure of a court lady Artist unknown Earthenware with cold painting China, from the vicinity of Xi'an, Tang dynasty ,746-755 Previously owned by: Ming K'i Gallery, Waardamme, Belgium; Acquired with funds from the Campe'schen Historische Kunststiftung Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg 2010.77.2 Dimensions: h 64.5 cm, w 25 cm, h 19 cm © Museum für Kunst und Gewerbe</p>
	<p>Luggage cart and paddy wagon in front of a yurt Semipalatinsk/ Kazakhstan, 1899 Photographer: Samuil M. Dudin MARKK 2008.11:62 © MARKK</p>

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Women rolling up a felt carpet
Semipalatinsk/ Kazakhstan, 1899
Photographer: Samuil M. Dudin
MARKK 2008.11:34
© MARKK



Teapot, painted with people in a garden
room, peony and bird
Artist unknown
Canton, China, 19th c.
Porcelain, Famille Rose enamel colors, metal.
Donation Mrs. Oscar Wieler, entrance 1914
MARKK 14.127:54
Dimensions: h 9 cm, l 15 cm, d 10 cm
Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK



Bowl with braid-like decoration
Workshop unknown
Afrasiab (Old Samarkand), Samanid
dynasty, ca. 9th-11th c.
earthenware, white engobe and slip
painting under transparent glaze
Purchase from Wilhelm Henrich, Munich
Museum of Arts and Crafts Hamburg
1956.154
Property of the Foundation for the
Hamburg Art Collections
Dimensions: H 8cm, D 19cm
© Jörg Arend/Museum für Kunst und
Gewerbe



Coal truck to China
Tavan Tolgoi, Ömno-Gobi, Mongolia; 2018.
© Maria-Katharina Lang

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Monumental painting (fragment): The Battle of Qurman (Hu'erman dajie).
Jean Damascene Sallusti († 1781), Giuseppe Castiglione (1688-1766) et al. court painters.
Beijing, China, 1760
Colors and ink on silk
Purchase by Justus Beyer, 1904
MARKK, A 4577
Dimensions framed: H 476 cm, W 400 cm
Photo © Brigitte Saal/MARKK



Track laying along the historic tea road
Selenge, Mongolia; 2018
© Maria-Katharina Lang



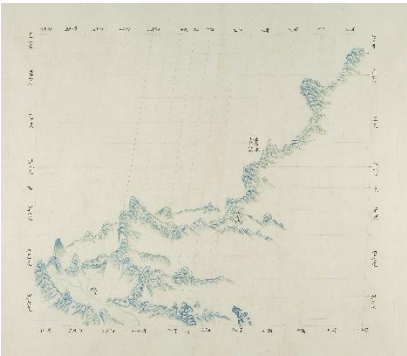



New road in the Gobi Desert, Mongolia
2018.
© Maria-Katharina Lang

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	<p>Road works in the Gobi desert, Mongolia 2018. © Maria-Katharina Lang</p>
	<p>Transverse scroll: the return of Lady Cai Wenji to the Han Empire among hunting Mongols. Artist unknown Suzhou, China, 18th c. Cotton, paint, paper, silk, wood Purchase from W. Jessel, entrance 1916 MARKK 16.10:1 Restored with funds from the Ernst von Siemens Art Foundation Dimensions framed: H 38 cm, W 1200 cm Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>
	<p>Map "tianxia yutu" (image of the whole territory under the sky) China/Manchuria/ East Turkestan/ Korea (detail) Anonymous cartographers Beijing, China, early 18th c. paint, wood, cardboard, bone, silk Purchase J.F.G. Umlauff, 1906 MARKK 640:07 Restored with funds from the Ernst von Siemens Art Foundation Dimensions: H 60 cm, W 1500 cm Photo © Paul Schimweg/MARKK</p>
	<p>360° tour through the exhibition "Steppes & Silk Roads" © dataport</p>

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