

ROSALIND ROBINSON RWA SWA

ARTIST'S STATEMENT ABOUT THE PROJECT:

I began my work on the project travelling along the Silk Roads via Museum visits and books, gathering as much information as possible to begin formulating ideas for paintings. As I soon discovered, the scale of the subject is vast with the history of the Silk Routes going back thousands of years to 114 BC and the subsequent network of trade routes spanning thousands of miles across Asia, Africa and Europe.

After two or three months of research, realising that I could spend several years delving deeper into this endlessly fascinating history without ever managing to pick up a paintbrush, I decided I must choose to concentrate on just one aspect of the subject that promised to provide the most inspiration for my work.

I decided to focus my attention on the characters that might, in my imagination, be involved in trading along the Silk Routes - trade not just in commodities like silks and spices, but also the trading of ideas and cultures.

Consequently, the eight paintings I have completed for the project so far are all portraits, all of them incorporating symbolism and allegory to tell a small part of the story of trade along the Silk Routes.

Like Midori I am interested in story-telling and inventing characters. My portraits are always based on people I know, but as I work on my paintings the appearance of that person will change as I adapt their personalities to fit the narrative I want to suggest. I'm interested in what costume and facial expression can tell us about time and place and I enjoy the opportunity to invent costumes for the characters in my paintings.

It was pure chance that brought Midori and I together, but the serendipitous joining of our two cultural backgrounds, East to West, is ideally fitting for the Silk Road Project. An interesting juxtaposition of our respective works has resulted.

Rosalind Robinson 2024