



**A journey of knowledge. 'The Travels of Marco Polo'
and its Legacy between East and West.**

July 15th – November 15th 2024
Beijing – World Art Museum Beijing (Millennium Museum)

ISTITUTIONS

The exhibition is the main event of the celebrations dedicated to the 700th anniversary of Marco Polo's passing in China; it is organised by the **Italian Cultural Institute in Beijing**, the **Italian Embassy in Beijing**, the **diplomatic network in China** and is coordinated by **Treccani**, with the support of the **Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation**.



Ministero degli Affari Esteri
e della Cooperazione Internazionale



Ambasciata d'Italia
Pechino
意大利驻华大使馆
北京



TRECCANI

CONCEPT

The Venetian traveller Marco Polo and his book 'The Travels of Marco Polo' are a universally recognised example of a significant phase of global contacts between East and West, which developed in crucial domains such as trade and culture. This dissemination has led to a more profound understanding and awareness of far-off realms, notably including China.

The exhibition includes an introductory timeline, depicting the history and the main events of Venice and its near coastal cities between the 13th and the 17th centuries, from the life of Marco Polo to the immediately following centuries, in which the legacy of his memoirs 'The Travels of Marco Polo' contributed to a greater understanding of the Asian continent in Europe.

1- The first section of the exhibition "Marco Polo, Historical Documents and Venice" is dedicated to direct sources on Marco Polo and the reproduction of the historical and geographical knowledge of the East existing in Europe. Inside this first chapter, the facsimile of *Le devisement du monde* (Ms-5219) with its splendid miniatures will be on display, together with an original edition of 'The Travels of Marco Polo' by Giovanni Battista Ramusio. In addition to the original and facsimile manuscripts, this section will digitally reproduce some illuminated pages in macro formats, as visual panels. The aim is to guide visitors through an intellectual journey, exploring the shared imagery of oriental animals, landscapes, people, and costumes that emerged in Europe following the dissemination of 'The Travels'. This section will also host a facsimile copy of the so-called Marco Polo Bible, the facsimile of Marco Polo's Testament, a series of original Venetian coins and gold zecchins, a valuable bas-relief in Istrian stone depicting the Lion of St. Mark and a magnificent series of Venetian views on loan from the Correr Museum in Venice, as well as the reproduction of Frà Mauro's map, considered the greatest memorial of medieval cartography.

The exhibition aims to highlight the routes of communication and cultural exchange that became possible thanks to the very legacy of 'The Travels of Marco Polo', read by countless travellers, such as preachers, merchants, and men-at-arms over the following decades and centuries.

2- The second section "Evocative and sacred images, and travelling preachers" is dedicated to the figures of preachers who undertook long journeys along the caravan routes in the same years as Marco Polo. On display are works that evoke the dimension of preaching, through important oil paintings on a gold background from the 14th century, some of them portable.

3- The third section "Merchants, Jewellery, Glass and Precious Textiles", investigates the routes of material culture in Venice and along the trade routes from Venice to China, with loans from the most important museums' collection in Italy . The narration will be accompanied by geographical details, indications of relevant regions and cities. Frà Mauro's world map will be digitalized in an interactive version to ensure better engagement with the visitors. Among the objects included in this section there will be precious 13th and 14th centuries porcelain from the Imperial Kiln Institute in Jingdezhen. The museum will offer three different types of porcelain: a group belonging to the Dehua style of porcelain described by Marco Polo in his book, a group of porcelain produced by the imperial kiln for high dignitaries and the imperial court during Marco Polo's years of stay, and a few examples produced in Jingdezhen that visualise in form an encounter with the West. The section will visualise on Fra Mauro's map, not only Marco Polo's journey and the routes subsequently continued by the merchants, but also the architecture that the traveller visited in China, delicately depicted on the cartography on display.

4- The fourth section of the exhibition, "Warriors and Metal Masters between Italy and the Routes of the East" is dedicated to the magnificent parade armour created by master craftsmen both in Italy and in the territories traversed by travellers throughout Asia.

5- The fifth section is dedicated to navigation, the measurement of time and space, as the title states: "Towards the Modern World: Measuring Space, Time and Knowledge in Italy of China". The exhibition will be closed by a number of important works of art executed in the 19th century that evoke the figure and achievements of Marco Polo; in particular, on display, there will be Galileo Chini's sketches made for the stained-glass windows of the Italian Municipality Palace in Tianjin, depicting Marco Polo's

arrival in China; Tranquillo Cremona's large oil on canvas depicting Marco Polo in front of Kublai Khan and Emanuele Luzzatti's illustrations for the 'The Travels of Marco Polo' book.

7-The final chapter of the exhibition will feature an immersive augmented reality experience with a virtual and multidisciplinary narrative. This experience, facilitated by wearable devices, will allow visitors to embark on Marco Polo's journey. Being a digitally distinct section, easily separable from the main exhibition, this VR narrative can be conveniently accessed and reproduced in other cities.

Scientific Committee: Prof. Massimo Bray (General Director of Treccani Italian Encyclopaedia Institute), Prof. Tiziana Lippiello (Rector of Ca' Foscari University); Mgr. Alberto Rocca (Director Veneranda Biblioteca Ambrosiana), Prof. Emeritus Luciano Formisano (National Academy of Lincei), Prof. Andrea Nanetti (Nanyang Technological University Singapore, Institute of Venetian Sciences and Letters), Prof. Antonio Montefusco (Ca' Foscari University), Prof. Eugenio Burgio (Ca' Foscari University), Weng Yanjun (Director of the Imperial Kiln Institute in Jingdezhen), Prof. Cheng Mo (Peking University); Prof. Rong Xinjinang (Peking University), Arch. Alessandra Quarto (Director and Collection Manager Museo Poldi Pezzoli), Enrico Colle and Simona di Marco (Director and Vice Director Museo Stibbert), Jing (Director of the World Art Museum).

Lenders of the works: Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, Stibbert Museum in Florence, Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diocesan Archives in Vicenza, Fondazione Musei Civici in Venice, Collections of Banca Popolare of Vicenza, Wolsfoniana Museum in Genoa, Treccani Italian Encyclopaedia Institute, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.

Multimedia realisation: Way Srl

Catalogue: Treccani Italian Encyclopaedia Institute (With the participation of the Institutions and Museums involved)

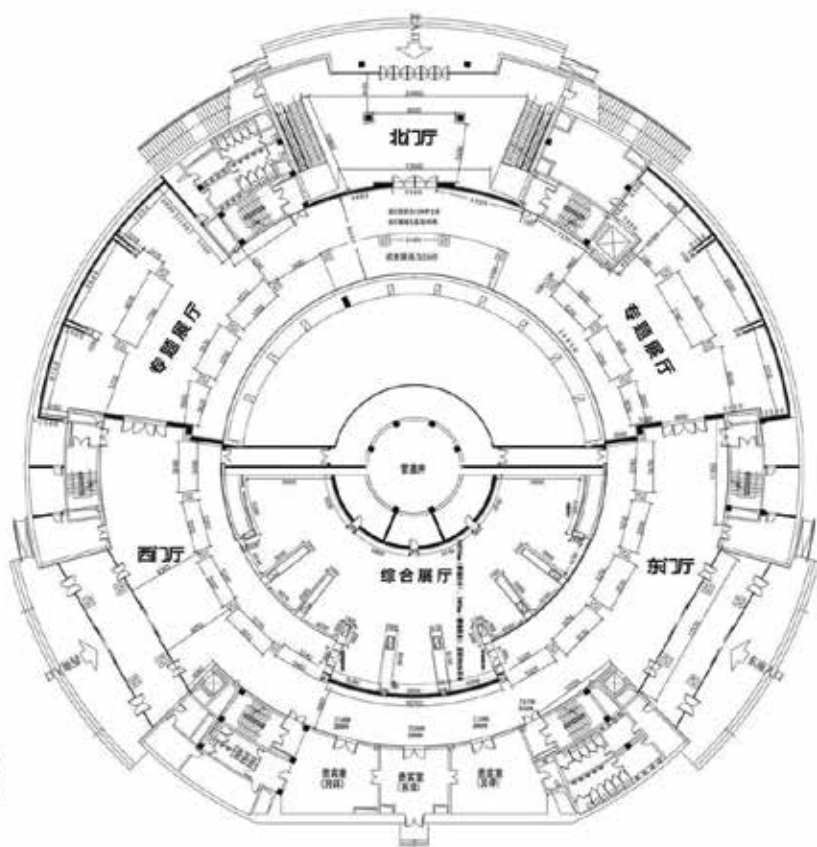


THE MUSEUM

section 1

China World Art Meuseum, also known as Millenium Museum, is China's first non-profit cultural institution with an international artistic vocation. The museum was founded with the aim of collecting important international art collections and with the intention of serving as an exhibition platform for international cooperation.

The museum's great hall features a circular bas-relief narrating China's millennial history; among the characters depicted are two Italians: Marco Polo and Matteo Ricci, the only western characters mentioned in the Chinese history.



一层平面图

计量单位: mm



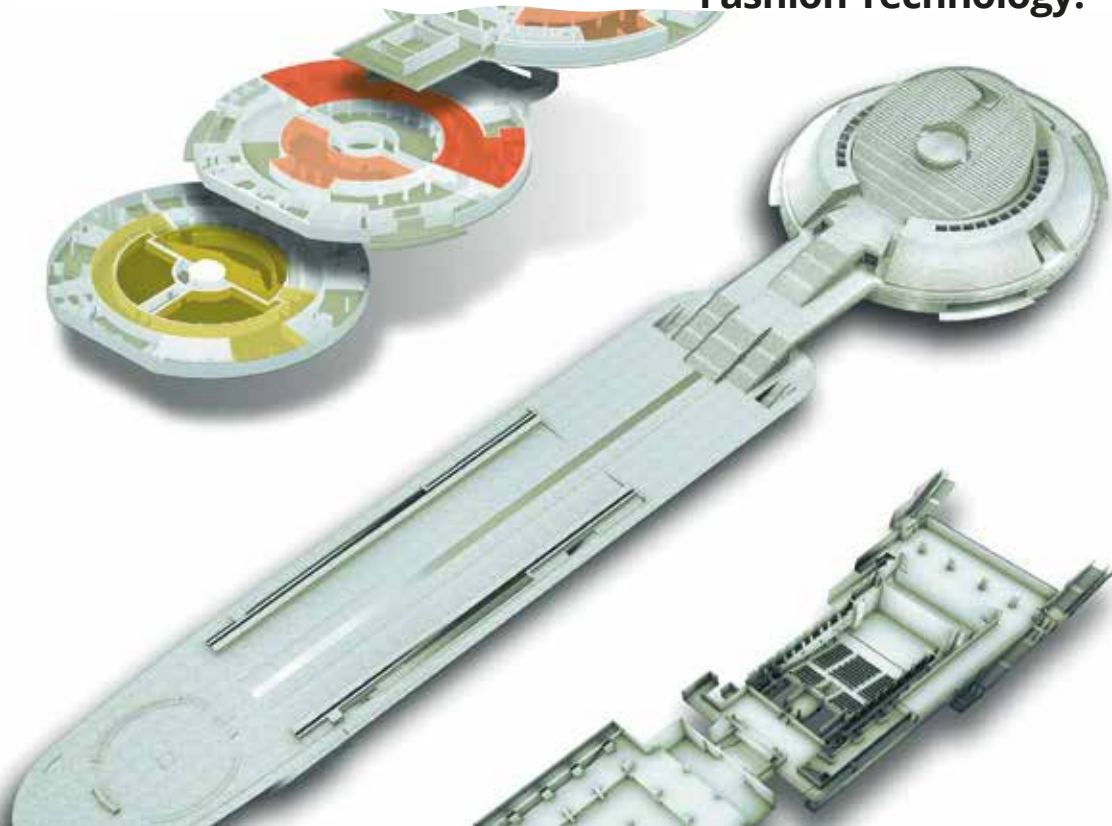


THE EXHIBITION

section 2

- 1200 square metres of exhibition space;
- 120 works of art, historical relics and documents from the most important Italian and Chinese institutions;
- original documents and editions;
- an immersive journey in augmented reality.

This exhibition project sees the collaboration of the most important Italian and Chinese institutions: **Poldi Pezzoli Museum in Milan, Stibbert Museum in Florence, Library of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Diocesan Archives in Vicenza, Fondazione Musei Civici in Venice, Collections of Banca Popolare of Vicenza, Wolsfoniana Museum in Genoa, Treccani Italian Encyclopaedia Institute, Jingdezhen Imperial Kiln Institute, Beijing Institute of Fashion Technology.**





The Venetian traveler Marco Polo and his book "The Travels of Marco Polo" (known in Italian as "Il Milione") are a universally recognized example of a significant phase of global contacts between East and West which evolved in crucial domains such as trade and culture. This dissemination has led to a more profound understanding and awareness of far-off realms

DIMENSION OF THE IMAGINARY

The first section of the exhibition tries to reconstruct and evoke the dimension of the imaginary, by showing animals, peoples and geographies narrated by Marco Polo and widely shared after the spread of 'The Travels of Marco Polo'. As part of this first chapter of the exhibition, a facsimile of the medieval illuminated manuscript of 'The Travels of Marco Polo' with its exquisite illustrations (provided by Treccani) will be on display together with an original edition of 'The Travels of Marco Polo' by Ramusio from the Maeci Library. In addition to the original and the physical replica of the manuscript, this section will digitally reproduce some illuminated pages in macro format as visual panels accompanying the first rooms of the exhibition. The aim is to guide visitors through an intellectual journey, exploring the shared imagery of oriental animals, landscapes, people and customs that emerged in Europe after the dissemination of 'The Travels of Marco Polo'.

Primo volume, & Terza edizione
**DELLE NAVIGAZIONI
ET VIAGGI**

RACCOLTO GIA DA M. GIO. BATTISTA RAMVSIO,
& con molti & vaghi discorsi, da lui in molti luoghi
dichiarato & illustrato.

NEL QUALE SI CONTENGONO

LA DESCRIZIONE DELL'AFRICA,
*& del paese del Prete Ianni, con varij viaggi, dalla Città di Lisbona, et dal Mar
Rosso infino à Calicut, et all'isole Molucche, doue nascono le Spezierie,
Et la Nauigatione attorno il Mondo.*

Con la Relatione dell'isola Giapan, scoperta nella parte del Settentrione: Et alcuni capitoli
appartenenti alla Geographia, estratti dell'Historia del S. Giouan di Barros Portoghese.
Con **TRE TAVOLE** di Geographia in disegno, che hanno le marine,
secondo le Carte da nauigare de Portoghesi, & fra terra, secondo
gli scrittori che hanno descritto li detti viaggi.

Con due **Indici**, l'uno delli nomi de gli auctori che descrivono le dette Nauigationi & Viaggi:
L'altro delle cose piu notabili di Geographia, de costumi de popoli, delle Spezierie,
& d'altro che in esso volume si contengono.



Con privilegio del Sommo Pontefice, et della
Illustriss. Senato Veneto.



THE DIMENSION OF THE HISTORY AND GEOGRAPHIES OF THE ORIENT

The second section is dedicated to the reproduction of the historical and geographical knowledge of the East that existed in Europe at the time of the first 'globalisation'; the section will therefore be devoted to the dimension of history and eastern geographies known in the western world between the 14th and 16th centuries. The narration will be based on Treccani's reproduction of Frà Mauro's world map, considered the greatest memorial of medieval cartography, a map of the world created around 1450 by the Venetian cartographer Fra Mauro. The document will be present in an anastatic copy and digitalized to ensure better use and interaction by the public.



The section will visualise on Fra Mauro's map Marco Polo's journey through the material culture of the lands and cultures he describes in 'The Travels of Marco Polo'. More than 120 works of art, ancient artefacts, suits of armour and contemporary craftsmanship will accompany the visitor on a geographical and cultural journey through the Polo's geographies of the 14th century.





The exhibition will draw a bridge between East and West, tracing times, cultures and exchanged goods of the first globalisation era between Venice and Beijing.



之外將萬里，明起于東，故文皇帝航海之使不知其幾十萬里，天實啓之，不可強也。當是時，臣為內監鄭和，亦不辱命焉。其圖列道里國土，詳而不誣，載以昭來世，志武功也。



The exhibition will trace the geography of the world through Italian and Chinese cartography of the 15th century, navigation and travel instruments used from the time of Marco Polo.

The exhibition will trace known geographies and cultures through the eyes of medieval travellers: preachers, merchants and men-at-arms.



THE GREAT EXHIBITION

All the Stages

The Great Exhibition in its entirety will be hosted in 4 cities

- 📍 Beijing
- 📍 Hangzhou
- 📍 Shenzhen
- 📍 Yangzhou

Beijing

Yangzhou

Hangzhou

Shenzhen



THANKS



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北京



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