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Isabelle de Borchgrave Is All Over the Paper

by [JENNIFER RAISER](#) on JUNE 2, 2011 · [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



The [Isabelle de Borchgrave](#) costume exhibit, “[Pulp Fashion](#)” has been a major hit for the [Legion of Honor](#), so much that its run has been extended through June 12. Likewise the [Serge Sorokko Gallery](#) is hosting an exhibit of de Borchgrave’s work, much of it for sale, providing a vibrant window into the varied abilities and enthusiasms of this versatile and delightful artist who also happens to be a Belgian Countess. (But she won’t tell you herself; it’s not relevant to her work.) Serge Sorokko Gallery’s new light-filled aerie at 55 Geary showed the vibrant colors and organic forms of Borchgrave’s work to its best advantage; the exhibit draws the same breathless “I can’t believe that’s made of paper,” wonder that has made her Legion show such a draw. Wall hangings, sculptures, vases, installations, textiles, even a chandelier made of pulp offer a new perspective on paper-mache. Amidst the installation of her whimsical wares, we asked de Borchgrave where

she gets her ideas.

“Travel is my muse..” she responded. “It provides the colors and the ideas for my work. I vacation in a little village in Tuscany. The views are remarkable. I go to Greece for the light. Sometimes I’ll go to Paris (from Brussels) for lunch and pop into the Musee Branly or the Decorative Arts galleries of the Louvre. You just have to look at the world with a fresh eye.” What is she most impressed with about San Francisco? “People are eager to try new things. People come up to me and say they were inspired by my show to try to make the paper dresses or objects at home. I admire that spirit!”

De Borchgrave has her painterly hand in many projects; along with her museum and gallery work, her designs can be seen on china for [Gien](#), table linens for Lexox, paper goods for [Caspari](#), even a small collection of party goods for [Target](#). Yet she appears to be very, very hands on. How does she keep up with it all? “Nobody invents anything, and yet I always try to do something new,” she says. “I have a workshop with 5-10 interns, young people who are eager to learn this craft. They are a huge help. But I do all of the painting myself –I put my heart into painting., always. “ She pauses to adjust a piece, “If you love what you do....” She smiles, searching for the English explanation of her Belgian thought. “It is easy!”

