

## **Building the Silk Road**

(Abstract)

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In April 2004, the British Library mounted one of its most successful exhibitions to date, *The Silk Road: Trade, Travel, War and Faith*. This exhibition used many items from the Library's collections, as well as pieces from other institutions in London and around the world. Preparation for this exhibition, and the actual installation, were a major part of our studio's work for about a year. This work, however, was done in conjunction with the exhibitions department, curatorial staff and many others. From a conservation point of view there are many factors to consider when putting rare and fragile objects on display, such as the environmental conditions, lighting, installation schedule, and transportation of those objects.

Although conservation staff may not be directly responsible for all of these activities, we must be present at least in an advisory capacity to oversee and provide assistance in the handling and care of the art works. Some of the items displayed had never been exhibited or conserved before. There were many challenges faced by the conservation and exhibitions departments, including the installation of a large replica cave, which arrived in 13 pieces to be assembled by its Chinese conservators and technicians.