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## Paper and Painting Collide in Isabelle de Borchgrave's Latest Show

By Allison McCarthy on March 22, 2013 1:00 PM

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Petite Chapeau 1, mixed media on canvas



Anyone who saw the 2011 Legion of Honor show *Pulp Fashion* has great admiration for the delicate, intricate work of **Isabelle de Borchgrave**. The Belgian artist dazzled San Franciscans with her study in costume history—from the gowns of Elizabeth I and Marie-Antoinette to the couture works of masters like Paul Poiret, Christian Dior, and Coco Chanel. But the most interesting part? Her brilliant replicas were made entirely of paper.

Now she's back, with a show of her signature Delphos dresses (inspired by the designs of early-20th-century artist Mariano Fortuny), works on paper, new paintings, and a selection of bronze sculptures never before exhibited in the US.

*Isabelle de Borchgrave: New Paintings and Sculptures* is a stark departure from the work shown at the Legion, a refreshing counterbalance to the monochromatic palette of pristine whites and the muted shades of regal and plebeian wardrobes. Here, vibrant colors, tribal patterns, and rich textures reflect the influence of extensive travels and appreciation of ethnic textiles. Bold works on paper are meticulously hand painted and then folded into an origami-like, accordion-style canvas. Elaborately painted life-size kimonos pose across from de Borchgrave's paper pleated Grecian dresses modeled after Fortuny's famous pleated silk Delphos gowns. And across from those fragile forms are dense corsets of worn patinas. Small scale sculptures of jewelry-like neckpieces are juxtaposed with larger-scale bronze works. All in all, it's a carefully curated display of the artist's range and unique ability to transform a common medium into the otherworldly. Givenchy puts it beautifully, "Isabelle is one of a kind. She plays with paper as a virtuoso plays an instrument."

**Exhibit on view Wed. 3/20–Sat. 4/20 at Serge Sorokko Gallery, 55 Geary St., sorokko.com**

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