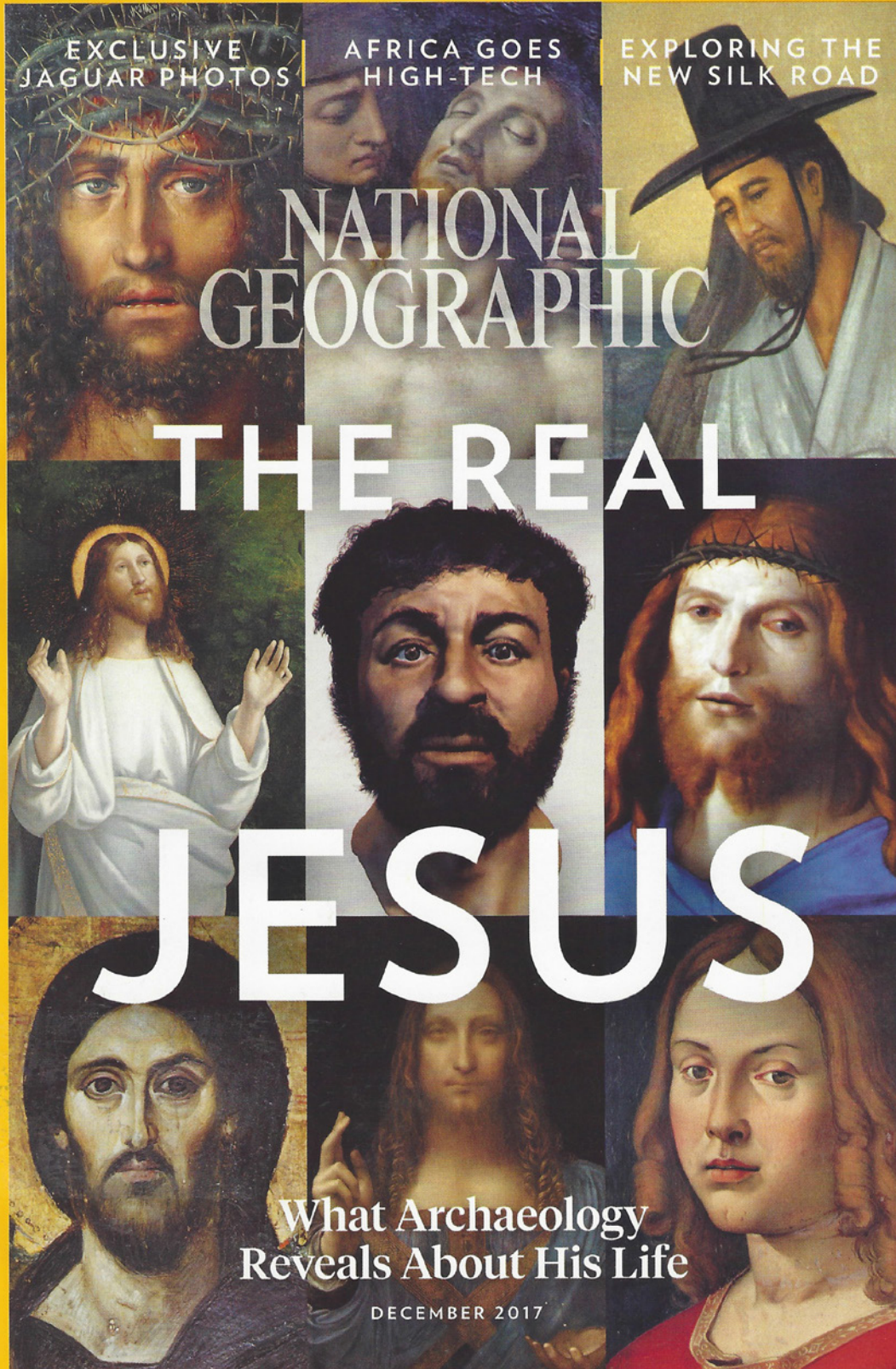


National Geographic International
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PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

THE SILK ROAD

A NEW ODYSSEY

Steeped in history and tradition, the Silk Road has been reinvented as a creative journey through the eyes of seven artists and Hennessy X.O

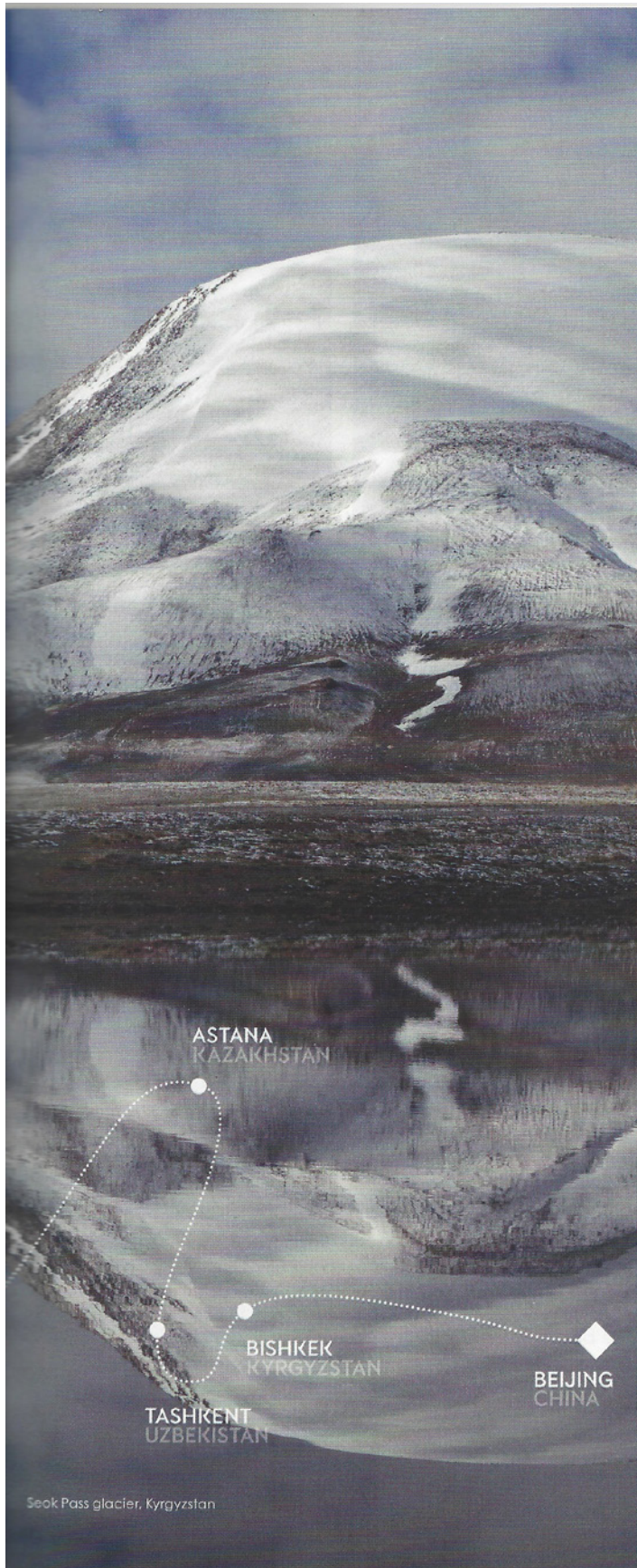
ISTANBUL
TURKEY

TBILISI
GEORGIA

BAKU
AZERBAIJAN

Hennessy
X.O

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PROMOTIONAL FEATURE

For centuries, the members of the Hennessy Comité de Dégustation have met to taste eaux-de-vie and blend the boldest cognacs. For Hennessy X.O — the most iconic Hennessy cognac, created in 1870 — seven distinct chapters were identified from a single slip, each seamlessly flowing into the next: Sweet Notes, Rising Heat, Flowing Flame, Chocolate Lull, Spicy Edge, Wood Crunches and Infinite Echo. Invited to the Maison Hennessy in France, seven artists from seven countries along the Silk Road immersed themselves in Hennessy's traditional savoir-faire and craftsmanship. An exciting exchange of ideas between the artists and Hennessy was then born, their unique artwork mirroring the personal and sensorial journey behind each drop of Hennessy X.O and reflecting their own experiences of this evocative and timeless journey.

The odyssey begins in Istanbul's Karaköy quarter, where artist **Burçak Bingöl** has her atelier. Tables overflow with white pottery and flowers from her visit to the Hennessy Château de Bagneux.

"This tied in perfectly with my interest in the Silk Road," she says, "as one of the art forms from Asia was the floral motif the Chinese used on their blue-and-white pottery." To see more, she heads across town to the 15th-century Topkapı Palace. "Look at the detail," she smiles, pointing to a panel decorated with blue and white flowers. "We call these Ancient Chinese lotus blossoms *hatayi*, and that's what I'll name my project for Hennessy, fusing ideas from the East and West — just like Istanbul."

FROM TURKEY TO GEORGIA

The Silk Road snakes through Turkey and into Georgia, where **Rocko Iremashvili** is working on

MEET THE ARTISTS

TURKEY



BURÇAK BİNGÖL

GEORGIA



ROCKO IREMASHVILI

AZERBAIJAN



RASHAD ALAKBAROV

KAZAKHSTAN



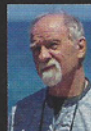
ASKHAT AHMEDYAROV

UZBEKISTAN



VYACHESLAV USEINOV

KYRGYZSTAN



VICTOR SYRNEV

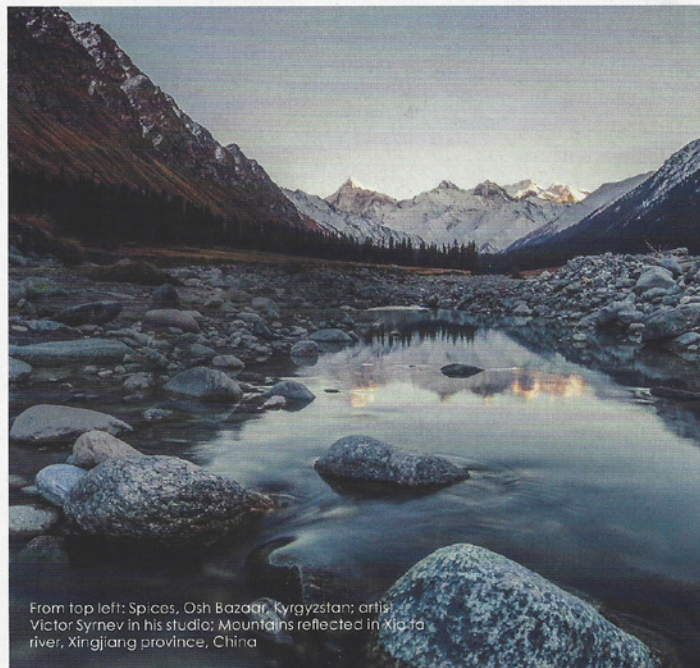
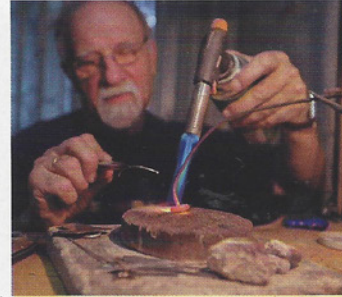
CHINA



YIN XIUZHEN

FIND OUT MORE
ABOUT THE ARTISTS AT
[NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM/
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PROMOTIONAL FEATURE



From top left: Spices, Osh Bazaar, Kyrgyzstan; artist Victor Syrnev in his studio; Mountains reflected in Xiaoqing river, Xinjiang province, China

After a cramped climb, **Victor Syrnev** emerges into Burana Tower's circular, sun-drenched rooftop, overlooking almond and pistachio groves. The tower is all that remains of Balasagun, a once-thriving trade hub on the Silk Road. "This is a land of living history," Victor says.

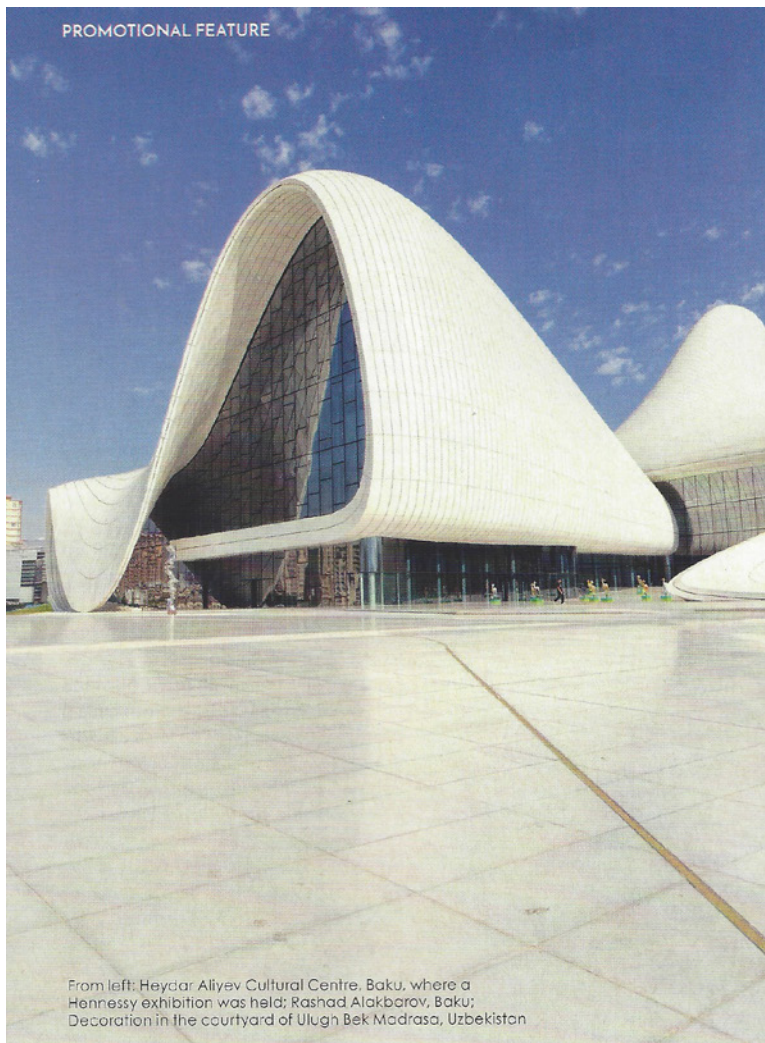
"As a country on the Silk Road, Kyrgyzstan has always been a conduit for trade, ideas and stories. I'm interested in the juxtaposition of old and new, in the encounter between East and West."

And finally, as the Road threads east through China, **Beijing** edges into sight — the last stop on this epic journey. **Yin Xiuzhen** stands amid the vast, paved expanse of Tiananmen Square at sunset as the national flag is lowered. Inspired by Hennessy's seven tasting notes, Yin's work, seven different-colored towers, is a vibrant testament to the various cultures along the route. "As the Chinese proverb goes," she reflects, "traveling thousands of miles is better than reading thousands of books."

THE SILK ROAD ODYSSEY BY HENNESSY X.O

DISCOVER MORE ABOUT THE SEVEN ARTISTS AND
SEVEN CITIES AT NATIONALGEOGRAPHIC.COM/HENNESSY

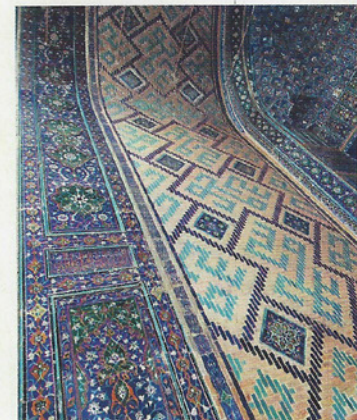
HENNESSY.COM - PLEASE DRINK RESPONSIBLY



From left: Heydar Aliyev Cultural Centre, Baku, where a Hennessy exhibition was held; Rashad Alakbarov, Baku; Decoration in the courtyard of Ulugh Bek Madrasa, Uzbekistan



"THE RISING FLAMES
OF NATURE HAVE
HELPED TO SHAPE
OUR LANDSCAPE AND
CULTURE."
RASHAD ALAKBAROV



his latest piece at his **Tbilisi** studio — a sort of giant tic-tac-toe. "The noughts play with this idea of eternity, while the crosses are religious. Iconography is so strong in Georgia that it always appears in my work." Later, he drives north to the Jvari Monastery in the town of Mtskheta, where a portrait of Jesus hangs, his hand extended into the gesture of eternity. Rocko is right — art really is about showing old symbols in new ways.

It's not just in Georgia that symbolism resonates with the people living alongside the Silk Road. Atop a volcano near **Baku**, Azerbaijan, **Rashad Alakbarov** surveys oozing mud slowly solidifying in the sulfurous air. "As an Azeri, fire and heat will always resonate strongly," he says, his country the so-called Land of Fire. "Over

the course of history, the rising flames of nature have helped to shape our landscape and my next work will reflect this in an elemental way".

Far across the steppe, **Astana** soars skywards, its glittering glass-and-steel towers a modern salute to the ancient traditions of the Silk Road. Deep within the National Museum of the Republic of Kazakhstan, **Askhat Ahmedyarov's** studio is filled with edgy, quasi-political takes on society and the city around him. "I'm inhabiting the space between the nomadic and modern world," he explains. "Living on the Silk Road, I need to renew myself, to root myself somehow."

FROM UZBEKISTAN TO CHINA

In contrast to the Kazakh capital's skyscrapers, **Tashkent's** Chorsu

Bazaar is an ancestral totem, residing beneath a turquoise dome in the heart of the city. "Tashkent is a colorful city," says **Vyacheslav Useinov**, as locals scoop vibrant spices into baskets. "And it's this that gives the city a unique charisma."

Vyacheslav's city is one of crumbling minarets, gold domes and imposing Soviet-era architecture, which, coupled with the 15th century Silk Road, makes Tashkent so special. "The history of the city impacts daily life, and that's why Tashkent's origins and architectural innovations are important," he says. They allow us to connect the old and the new."

Far from the hubbub of the Uzbek bazaars, peace prevails in **Bishkek**, in Kyrgyzstan's rural north.